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# SCREEN

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**The Journal of the  
Society for Education in  
Film and Television**

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**January/February 1969  
Volume 10/Number 1**

Arthur Penn *Jim Hillier*

The Left-Handed Gun *Terry Bolas*

Editing Anderson's *If . . . .*

*David Gladwell*

Film and Television at Bulmershe

*Roger Watkins*

Film Study at Hammersmith College of

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Problem of Film Availability

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## Editorial

*Screen* is a development of *Screen Education*, and is the journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television.

Its Editors are Kevin Gough-Yates and Terry Bolas. Kevin Gough-Yates lectured full time at Isleworth Polytechnic for three years and now works in Film Studies at Hornsey College of Art. He has written a number of articles and reviews on aspects of the cinema. Terry Bolas was Honorary Secretary of the Society from 1965-1966 and taught at Holloway Comprehensive School for four years. More recently, he was employed as a lecturer in Educational Technology and Film Teaching at Wandsworth Technical College. Since 1 January 1969, he has become the Society's new full time Secretary and Teacher Adviser. He too has written a number of articles on the cinema.

The Editors intend *Screen* to provide a forum in which controversial areas relevant to the study of film and television can be examined and argued. It is by no means clear what the nature of Film Study should be. Film is used in different ways by different people and at different levels. In this edition, the articles by Elfreda Symonds and Roger Watkins describe personal experiences in the construction of film courses. That both devised courses in an experimental manner emphasizes the need for more public discussion of the structure of film courses and of the ends implicit in the teaching method that is used. These courses are still developing.

At the same time *Screen* will contain articles of considered criticism. The book and film reviews will generally be articles providing information and argument rather than polemic. In this edition, there is an introductory article on Arthur Penn and a detailed consideration of *The Left Handed Gun*. Subsequent editions will contain analyses of the rest of Arthur Penn's films. Other directors and areas will be studied in similar detail in later editions of the journal.



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# Arthur Penn

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## Jim Hillier

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While as a rule we should trust the tale, not the artist, Penn is among the most articulate of film-makers, acutely conscious of his artistic and social preoccupations. This account of Penn's life and collation of his statements from interviews aims not to explain the films but rather to set them in context.

Penn was born in 1922. After his parents divorced he spent his school years between his mother and brother in New York and New Hampshire and his father in Philadelphia. He began to study watch-making, his father's trade, but in 1943 enlisted in the Army. During Army training he started a small theatre group, where he first associated with Fred Coe. Towards the end of the war Penn voluntarily lost rank to join Joshua Logan's military theatre company. On demobilization in 1946, he continued his studies, first in North Carolina, then in Perugia and Florence.

Penn had studied literature and thought first of becoming a writer, then of working in the theatre. But 1951 saw him starting a career in television, where he worked almost consistently till his movie début in 1957. By 1952 Penn had graduated to co-director of the Colgate Comedy Hour where he worked at one time with Jerry Lewis, said to be at the origins of *Mickey One*. From 1953 Penn was directing drama programmes, with Fred Coe as producer. Penn says, 'at that time TV was poor, so we were free'.<sup>1</sup> It was an auspicious time to be working in television. Penn was one of a group of young directors which included Lumet, Frankenheimer and Mulligan. He worked with writers like Chayevsky, William Gibson, Horton Foote, Leslie Stevens, and actors like Kim Stanley, E. G. Marshall, Paul Newman, some of whom were later involved in his films.

Penn had already directed *Blue Denim* on stage in 1954 and after *The Left-Handed Gun* in 1957 he turned almost completely to Broadway theatre. There he directed people like Henry Fonda, Anne Bancroft, Patty Duke in plays by

**Jim Hillier** is Film Research Officer for the Humanities Curriculum Project

William Gibson (*Two for the Seesaw*, *The Miracle Worker*) and Lillian Hellman (*Toys in the Attic*). Though he has never again worked so intensely in it as during the five-year gap between his first and second films, Penn has maintained contact with the theatre.

Penn's TV and theatre experience has obviously influenced his film career, not least in terms of the writers and actors with whom he worked. Fred Coe gave Penn his first chance in the cinema and may well have been decisive in ensuring that Penn continued to make films after *The Left-Handed Gun*. Penn has always refused to be put under contract, thus preserving the freedom he enjoyed in TV and theatre. It was in TV that Penn first used several cameras simultaneously. 'I think the system is excellent because it allows you not to break the continuity of acting'.<sup>1</sup> As one might expect from a theatre director and habitué of Actors' Studio, actors are important to Penn. He considers Kazan the greatest director of actors and has followed his method, which Penn describes as 'half improvisation, and half control'. 'I prefer to choose actors from theatre and, what is more, from Actors' Studio, because I like to leave actors a certain freedom and Actors' Studio people often have marvellous ideas'.<sup>2</sup>

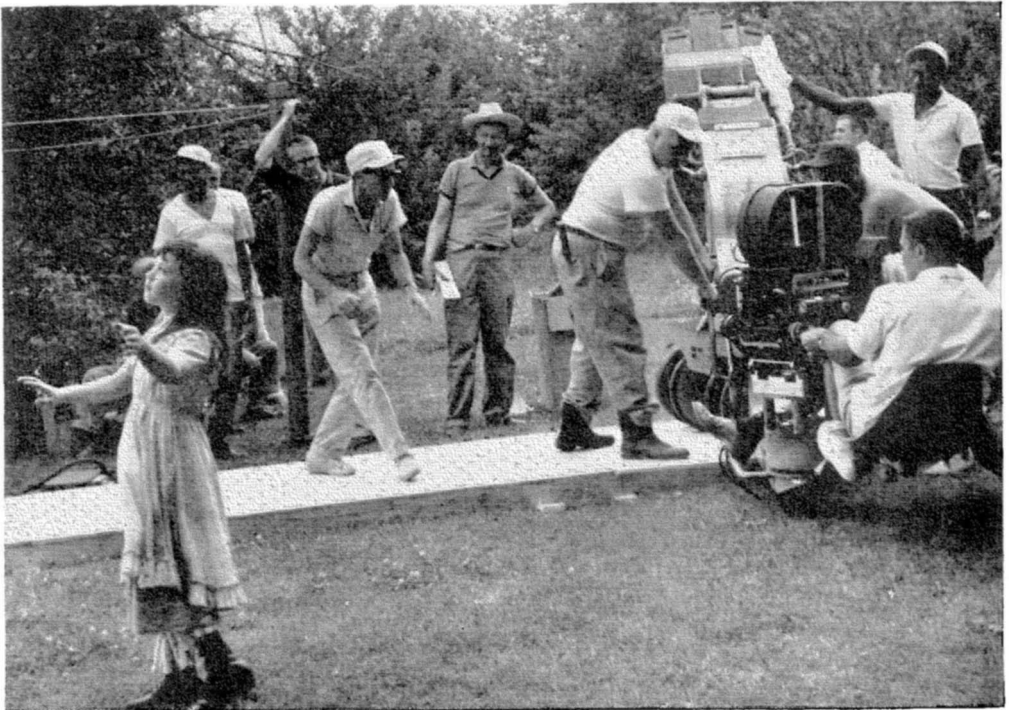
*The Left-Handed Gun*, Penn's first film, was made in Hollywood in low-budget conditions. He says he virtually lost control of the film and has described the experience as unpleasant, but his feelings seem to have been strongly influenced by the film's reception. 'In America, nobody devoted more than three lines to the film and nobody went to see it. It was then that I thought I could no longer work in Hollywood, that I couldn't stick it any longer. So I went back to New York and my theatre work. . . .'<sup>3</sup> Even at this time, Penn felt Hollywood was dying, partly due to the McCarthyist scare: 'The big companies got scared, made crazy films, losing all contact with real life, with the people. Indirectly this was the death of the big studio. That's why we're now witnessing a more intimate cinema, a freer cinema perhaps'.<sup>3</sup>

Penn's dejection after *The Left-Handed Gun* seems to have gone further than mere disenchantment with Hollywood. 'I was so disappointed by the American cinema that I didn't think I would make other films. But a friend (Coe) asked me to shoot *The Miracle Worker*. It was a quite different experience since we did the shooting in New York'.<sup>4</sup> But

by this time, something else had happened: *The Left-Handed Gun* had been shown in Europe. 'I only really regained confidence in myself when I read the critical reviews published in the French press. They had seen it and understood it. It was a miracle'.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to *The Left-Handed Gun*, Penn was intimately involved at every stage of *The Miracle Worker*. He was pleased with the experience, although he felt it was a 'too literal and too talkative' translation from play to film, and found some scenes 'very theatrical' in effect. These feelings may have induced Penn to be very consciously 'cinematic' in *Mickey One*. Despite the unhappy interlude on *The Train* in 1963, when Penn was replaced by Frankenheimer, at Burt Lancaster's request but without explanation, *The Miracle Worker*'s success in America helped to enable Penn to make *Mickey One* on the East Coast again and in conditions of almost absolute freedom. But he recognized that freedom also had its problems. 'I am free but it can be terrifying. It really is easier now to get authorization to deal with various subjects. What is more difficult is to know the truth about those subjects'.<sup>5</sup>

On the set of  
*The Miracle Worker*  
Penn is wearing dark  
glasses



After *Micky One*, Penn said that 'it ought to have been a better film, for I had the most total freedom'.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps this thought softened his attitude to the Hollywood 'machine'. He recognized, probably under the influence of the French critics who praised his work, that 'the American cinema is a technically exquisite, immaculate machine which in the hands of a few masters like Hitchcock and Hawks has become an Art. But I doubt very much that this cinema is capable also of giving essentially modern works, delicately moving, personal works'.<sup>7</sup> Penn admits to being influenced by Godard and Truffaut – 'with them, you can no longer make films as you made them before'.<sup>4</sup> What, for Penn, militates against personal expression in Hollywood is the system of working 'by committee'. He regarded *The Chase* as 'the chance to work on a grand scale . . . I had already worked in Hollywood and it wasn't very pleasant. Today, I'm trying to find out if I was wrong seven years ago, and if I can now master the big machine'.<sup>7</sup> 'It's a dreadful thing to make a film with so many technicians around you, so many very qualified, very clever people. . . . Each person surrounding you knows exactly how your idea should be realized and what emerges finally . . . is not your idea, but the archetype of the Hollywood idea, the commonplace, the banal. If you want to avoid that, you must constantly say no to your collaborators: systematically refuse their proposals, from a nuance of colour to the choice of a tie, you've got to change everything! . . . Very quickly, you no longer have either enough interest or energy to be able to do everything yourself, and that's why, finally, *The Chase* became a Hollywood film rather than a Penn film'.<sup>6</sup>

Penn values artistic freedom too highly to see the lesson of *Micky One*, that total freedom may not suit him, and that the tensions involved in working with 'the machine' may emerge as a creative tension. Certainly, Penn's most striking films are those where he is working within the system, within narrative conventions and within a formula or genre. Working this way seems to make him work against the conventions, both technically and thematically, and destroy our expectations of the genre by, for example, pushing the violence commonplace in westerns, or gangster films, to extremes of physicality. *Micky One*, which despite its American preoccupations, is in its abstraction more like a European film, may hint at the dangers inherent in Penn consciously rejecting American cinematic traditions.

Despite his problems with the 'system', Penn has become

progressively more interested in cinema and less in theatre. Broadway, and even off-Broadway, has become conventional and its audience 'limited', bourgeois, white, self-satisfied. . . .<sup>6</sup> 'The supposedly serious theatre attacks none of the fundamental values of its public. The cinema does: its effect is made at a very personal level, like a book or a poem'.<sup>8</sup> 'There was a time when, if you were working in theatre as a "serious" artist and went off to Hollywood, you were prostituting yourself, but now it's the opposite'.<sup>6</sup> But then Hollywood has also changed: 'The men who direct the studios are young . . . that makes a big difference. It was very difficult before, when there were those old kings, to talk to them about modern life. They didn't know what it was. Their values were from another time, excessively moralizing. . . . Hollywood studios are now only places where you get technical equipment . . . Hollywood as a "place" no longer exists'.<sup>4</sup>

'All my life I've never known any moment when we had ceased making war. The gangsters were all-powerful when I was young; I went to war at eighteen years of age, then there was Korea, and now Vietnam'.<sup>8</sup> Penn sees violence as 'a part of the character of America. It began with the western, the "frontier". America is a country where people realize their ideas in violent ways – we have no tradition of persuasion, idealism or legality . . . Kennedy was slaughtered. We are in Vietnam killing people and getting ourselves killed. We're living in a society of violence . . . I find myself forced to explain it, to be concerned with it. . . . What I wanted to say in *Micky One*, for example, was that we are living in an age of violence – we undergo a sort of contract with violence during our own lives'.<sup>8</sup>

Penn's films, whether set in the past or not, are concerned with American violence and morality now. In *Bonnie and Clyde* 'we wanted to make a modern film whose action takes place in the past'.<sup>4</sup> Speaking in December 1967 of his next project, Penn described it as 'concerning what was really the fate of the Red Indian at the time of Custer. Obviously, the analogy with the Negroes is great. But, at the moment, I wouldn't know how to make a film about Negroes. It would be limited, partial or romanticized'.<sup>6</sup> His new film would be 'fiction, not a documentary: in an adventure story you can underline political problems in a didactic way'.<sup>4</sup> 'I work on certain things which concern me, things I cannot see otherwise than in relation to the social and political role of the United States in the world. I work on

facts relative to the problems raised by the role of leader that this country has been forced to play, its lack of preparation for that role, and the disparity between the level of thought in the United States and elsewhere'.<sup>7</sup>

When we see, in Penn's work, the capacity for violence in characters almost totally unable to cope with it emotionally and morally, unable to comprehend the implications of their actions, we can see this as in some ways analogous to America's world role – wielding immense power without recognizing its full implications. In *Bonnie and Clyde* Penn says he tried to describe the social morality prevalent in the South – 'very moralizing, very puritanical, but integrating indissolubly into itself a form of violence against other human beings which, seen from outside, seems absolutely intolerable', a gulf between 'private rigour and public violence'.<sup>8</sup>

This helps to explain the power of myth in America and hence its presence in Penn's films. The adoption of heroes and myth provides, in part, a focal point, a sublimation of

*Bonnie and Clyde*





'public violence'. 'The idea of what happened behind legends has always interested me'.<sup>4</sup> By exposing a reality, not necessarily a documentary one, behind myth, Penn removes the prop which myth provides. All his films use myth in some form. Billy the Kid and Bonnie and Clyde are established folk legends, and there is a clear line between them – 'in the mythology of the American West, the automobile replaced the horse as the symbol of the outlaw'.<sup>8</sup> His intention in *The Left-Handed Gun* was 'to find, through the Billy the Kid myth, which is very alive in the United States, the deep myths of Greek tragedy. *The Left-Handed Gun* is Oedipus in the West. There are in the western conventions a ritual, a mythic simplicity, which make it a marvellous tragic mould'.<sup>1</sup> In the film, Moultrie provokes Billy's death when he discovers Billy does not live up to the heroic image Moultrie has created in his stories. In *Bonnie and Clyde*, Penn justifies the historical inaccuracies and beautiful people by stressing that 'we were dealing with the mythic aspects of their lives'.<sup>9</sup> The whole structure of the film, the banjo ballad (recalling folk ballads like Woody Guthrie's about Pretty Boy Floyd), is like elements of myth – the exhilaration of the chases – punctuated by sequences of violent reality, with the music faltering when Bonnie and Clyde are so wounded as to exclude the possibility of romantic myth. There are elements of similar banjo strains accompanying Bubber at the start of *The Chase*, which traces the elevation, by the community, of Bubber Reeves into a hero, a mythic figure. *Mickey One* can be seen as Modern Man, a hero of our times. In *The Miracle Worker*, 'there too there is a myth at the origin. All American schoolchildren have heard about Helen Keller'.<sup>1</sup> Penn's film exposes the violent effort behind the simple, noble legend. And myth need not be confined to characters – Penn has also been concerned, for example, with 'the myth of easy death'.<sup>3</sup>

The endings of Penn's films tend to sustain myth. Penn's own original ending to *The Left-Handed Gun*, a village procession with Billy's body, was a 'little ritual to close the cycle of the legend'.<sup>6</sup> After the bloody deaths in *Bonnie and Clyde*, Penn is conscious of endowing the final deaths with a mythic dimension by giving them 'a more "abstract", less physical character'.<sup>6</sup> The shooting down of Bubber Reeves in *The Chase* (part of Penn's addition to the script) secures his heroic stature in the community. The end of *The Miracle Worker* has, in contrast to most of the film, the nobility and exhilaration normally associated with the Keller myth. But

Penn likes also to inject a disturbing note of actuality. Most notably, Bubber is shot down 'à la Kennedy', as Penn says, but he also remarked that in Clyde's death 'there's even a bit of Warren's head which jumps, like Kennedy's in that famous photograph of his death'.<sup>6</sup>

Penn's sustenance of myth works ultimately as an indictment of the society which creates it. His heroes tend to have potential for spontaneity, open acceptance of life, but this potential is lost in the auto-destructive urges of the heroes and the destructive forces at work in the society from which they come. Their potential and their lack of awareness of the social implications of their acts stem from the same source, the characters' child-like quality. Penn acknowledges his closeness to the world of childhood, something he recognizes and admires in Truffaut – 'that comes from my own existence. When I was three, my parents divorced and I stopped believing in the adult world'.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, 'family' problems disturb Penn's characters. Billy the Kid kills when Tunstall, his 'father', is murdered, and reaches out hopelessly for a 'family' in Celsa and Saval. Annie Sullivan and the Kellers battle over who should be Helen's 'family'. Bubber Reeves rejects his parents and Jake Rogers seeks in Bubber and Anna an alternative 'family'. When Bonnie fails to communicate with her mother, Clyde tells her 'I'm your family now'.

Penn greatly admires Ford and Kazan, both of whose films have intense involvement with the growth and problems of American society. Like Kazan, Penn sees his characters' actions as determined by their social environment. What interested him in *The Chase* was 'not so much the hero but the framework in which he evolves, the society which transforms him'.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Penn's only serious additions to the script of *Bonnie and Clyde* concerned the dramatization of the era, in sequences like the old farmer turned off his land and the Okie camp (acknowledged by Penn as 'a sort of homage' to Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath*). 'When Bonnie and Clyde were killed, they were regarded as enormous folk heroes by many people. To dismiss them simply as killers, or pariahs, would be inaccurate. Because they were folk heroes, it's necessary to examine the times to see *why* they should be folk heroes. The times were out of joint. . . A time creates its own myths and heroes. If the heroes are less than admirable, that is a clue to the times'.<sup>9</sup>

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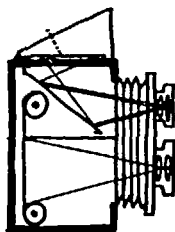
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# The Left Handed Gun

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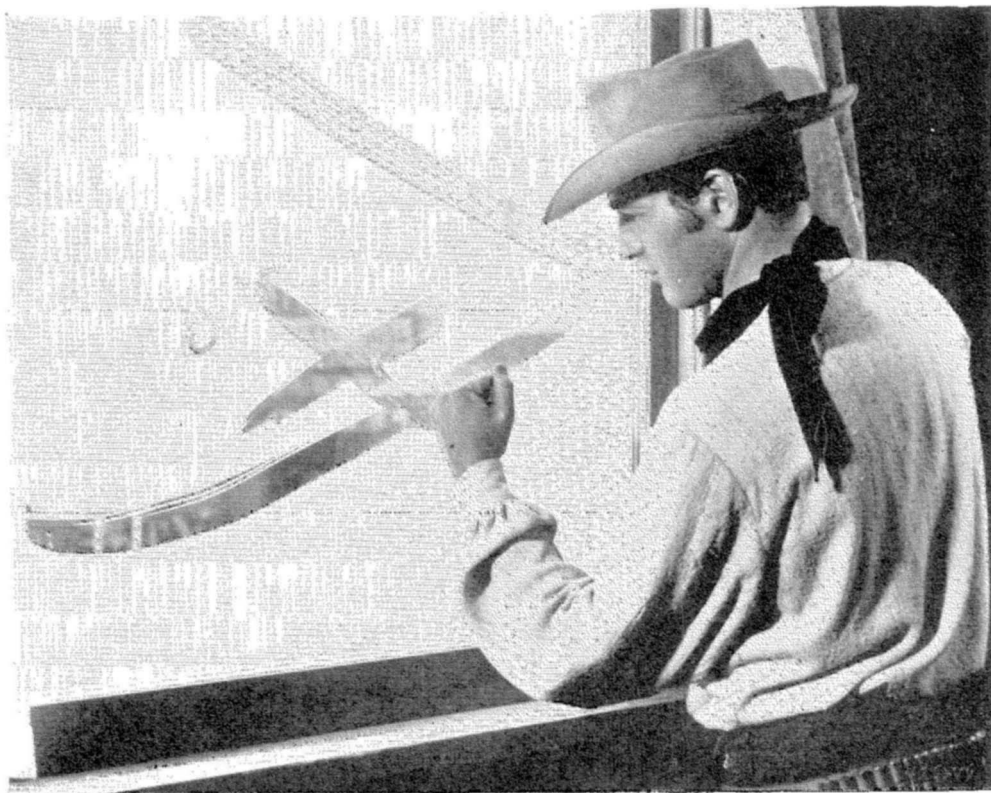
## Terry Bolas

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The aspirations that Penn brought to the making of *The Left Handed Gun* arose from his television experience. He hoped to find a more personal means of expression in the cinema. These aspirations were not realized despite the sympathetic help of producer Fred Coe and Penn vowed never to make another film in Hollywood.<sup>1</sup> The film had to wait for French critical acclaim before it gained the kind of success Penn wanted. In Britain an abridged version was put out as part of a double-bill with *Wind Across the Everglades*.

Terry Bolas is  
Secretary of SEFT  
and co-editor of  
*Screen*

"Through a glass  
darkly"



Penn blames much of the failure of *The Left Handed Gun* on the conservatism of the studios. He claims that a substantial part of the film was edited out and the negative burnt because of its 'surrealistic' qualities.<sup>2</sup> In this 'surrealist' category he includes the sequence where Billy draws his plan of revenge on the steamed-up window as the scene dissolves to the event he is planning. This sequence apparently was not understood and caused difficulties with the studios. Its inspiration came from T. S. Eliot, according to the director.<sup>2</sup>

But *The Left Handed Gun* is clearly a Penn film; the responsibility for its form and structure is his. He worked closely with Leslie Stevens who wrote the screenplay<sup>1</sup> and he chose to apply television techniques in shooting. In the burning of McSween's house, for example, Penn used two cameras shooting continuously and encouraged the actors by yelling at them like a silent film director. In the end it was the second camera, and not the one supervised by the Director of Photography, that achieved the effect Penn wanted.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the film has suggestions of a TV production in its camera-to-camera movements.

Penn agreed to make a Western because he was attracted to working within the most ritualistic of genres but at the same time determined to express his personal interests.<sup>2</sup> It seems inevitable that he should collide with established tastes. Billy the Kid is a figure of legend and myth, like Bonnie and Clyde, and one of Penn's preoccupations is with the way in which Society needs and endorses its legends. So *The Left Handed Gun* became Oedipus in the West.<sup>2</sup>

John Ford is one of the directors whom Arthur Penn most admires and acknowledgements to the 'classical' Ford Western are made in the film. The Mexican gypsies who shelter Billy, like the encamped farmers in *Bonnie and Clyde*, are Ford imagery. In other ways, too, the film follows a genre pattern. Billy wears white at the start of the film, Garrett black in archetypal hero and villain dress. By the end of the film, Garrett is in white and Billy in black, but only in the most superficial sense can they be said to have 'exchanged' roles.

One of the more obvious ways in which *The Left Handed Gun* can be compared with the established Western tradition is in the way children are used. In *Shane* the role of its hero is seen through the eyes of a child. In *High Noon* the children's game introduces a tension because of its fantasy shooting of Kane. In *The Left Handed Gun* the children's incompre-



hension and innocence is emphasized. It is a child who unwittingly sends Moon to his death, who laughs at Ollinger shot out of his boots and who climbs through the window to talk to Billy in the death cell. Childishness as such is important in understanding Billy. The behaviour of the children contrasts with that of Billy, Tom and Charlie: the children never play, they merely watch or do as they are told. Fooling around is left to Billy and his friends whose childishness consequently jars all the more.

Billy and the Gypsies

On one level Billy's selfish and almost psychopathic manner can be seen as the central element of the film. Great emphasis is placed on the quotation from Corinthians about putting away childish things. It is this passage that Tunstall reads to Billy and which McSween reads again when Billy is sitting by Tunstall's coffin. In the latter scene, the camera tracks towards Billy, while the side lighting emphasizes his youth. Word and image combine to counterpoint with the next scene: Billy dancing and shouting in the saloon on the day of the funeral. Thus we are shown the wild and unformed personality that exists behind Billy's glazed eyes.

Two aspects of more conventional approaches to the genre are treated with special emphasis – the problems of morality and violence and the clash of the new America with the old. Penn's uncompromising treatment of violence has almost become his cinematic signature. In *The Left Handed Gun* Billy kills four men, all of whom were involved in killing his boss Tunstall. As a result of his acts of revenge, he is hunted and killed. Many Westerns have similarly motivated their heroes with the desire for revenge and made the accomplishment of this task the climax of the film. In this convention the hero's determination and self-control are what commends his morality to us. Billy lacks self-control and his violence is not something produced to order when the situation demands it, but an expression of himself and his way of responding to other people. We are not moved to sympathy since Billy's killings lack the moral sanction we have come to expect.

In resorting to violence, Billy is not alone. He may represent the tendency at its most extreme but many of Penn's characters are similarly disturbed. When the mob burns McSween's house, we are offered an orgy of violence. As the hysteria increases, the characters become suddenly child-like in their responses. The man who beats his hand with his hat embodies this spontaneous expression of inarticulated feeling which suddenly turns towards violence. It is a gesture which gives the film an almost 'B' picture quality, but the frenzy into which the scene develops as the house burns and the mob rejoices makes this sequence of *The Left Handed Gun* into the bizarre spectacle which Penn intended.

If Billy's fate is predictable, its inevitability is the product of several things. The first of these is his inability to follow the rules of society: the fact that he resorts to violence without thinking of the consequences. Secondly, he consciously accepts a role of 'a figure of glory' with a sense of destiny and purpose which develops and becomes 'realized' in the 'Billy the Kid' comics that Billy looks at in the death cell. Thirdly, he is caught between the values of the old West and the new civilization. He is a 'man of straw', built with great care and then destroyed. In the legend of Billy the Kid, Penn explores the relationship between a society and an individual, between an innocent and unsophisticated personality and a civilization whose values are confused.

Paul Mayersberg has argued<sup>3</sup> that Billy uses violence as a means of communication. Billy's inability to read is empha-





Charlie, Billy and Celsa look at the amnesty notice

sized throughout the film: he is shown his own obituary and the notice of the amnesty. In the death cell he insists he can read the Billy the Kid comics. Violence is endemic in Penn's films and seems near to the surface with all his characters, as in the riot when McSween's house is burnt. Penn seems to be preoccupied with the nature and prevalence of violent actions and emphasizes these occasions in his films. He reinforces the shooting of Moon, the deputy, by having Tom, Charlie and Billy shoot the moon's reflection first. McSween's piano is 'shot' before the house is burnt down and McSween engulfed in the flames. The device of 'doubling' the killings indicates both the inevitability of the subsequent murders and also produces an effect of cumulative violence.

The outcome of Billy's stand against society comes inevitably from his acceptance of himself as some kind of saviour, supported by the legend that others create around him and which he comes to believe. It is with Christian images of suffering, pain and resurrection that the film is built. The

opening shot has Billy stumbling beneath the weight of the saddle on his shoulders as though he were carrying a cross. Two sequences particularly emphasize the fanatical belief that Billy has in his destiny. Both these are similar in the almost Gothic quality they assume. First, as Billy sits by Tunstall's coffin with a blanket cloak-like around him, he stares into the distance, vowing that he must 'do something', that he has a duty to avenge Tunstall and ignoring McSween's pleas that it is not 'his place' to do anything. 'You're not his kin', McSween says. The second is even more bizarre. He has gone to the forge with Celsa having been given the newspaper report of his death in the fire. Again with a black shawl around him, he assumes a similar attitude, renews his determination to carry out his self-imposed mission of revenge and burns the newspaper cutting. 'I've come alive', he says. He discovers his arm has healed: 'I'm whole'. As he pumps the forge, the camera tracks away to show Billy accepting his own resurrection.

This is followed immediately by the dissolve from his making love with Celsa to the shot of the man of straw burning. This is the key to the film, where Billy accepts his own legend and the image that Moultrie has put to him and begins to act out the tragic role of Billy the Kid. Here he makes the transition from the man in white to the man in black; Penn has said that the previous sequence, the flour fight with the soldiers, marks the end of Billy's innocence.<sup>2</sup> It was noted earlier that Billy and Garrett in a sense exchange roles and Garrett, though poorly developed as a character, is clearly intended to be as much the victim of himself as Billy is. One must contrast Garrett's advice to Billy in Modero to find a hole and hide in it with the irrational and emotional nature of his curious 'set speech' when Billy kills Hill at Garrett's wedding and when Garrett in turn takes it upon himself to become an instrument of revenge. So when Billy swings to and fro on a loose piece of rope outside his shack he holds it as though his neck were attached to it. Subsequently, when Garrett holds the same piece of rope, his stance is that of the hangman – not the hanged. Again, we can anticipate what will happen. This suggests the ending, but not its subtlety, for though Garrett kills Billy, it is because Billy chooses deliberately to go for a non-existent gun and so be shot.

The ending is not as Penn intended. He wanted the Mexicans to gather in wonder around the dead body of the legendary hero who has fallen across the struts of a wagon in a crucifix



posture. He wanted thus to endorse the myth. It is not clear whether the sequence was ever shot in this way but the present ending has some curious cut-aways of Garrett and his wife shot against a neutral background. That ending is missing but it would be consistent with the development of the film in that Billy finally makes a conscious decision about himself: to let himself be shot. Taking that decision, is the achievement of his self-awareness.

Garrett in white as  
Billy's role changes

*The Left Handed Gun* is as Penn has said a spiritual journey from light into dark. The nature of this journey is Billy's quest for knowledge which remains unrevealed: evidenced by his inability to read and his defensive assertions that he *can* read. Billy is an innocent who becomes the victim of society, accepting a role and a destiny within that society, but only understanding the nature of that role when it is too late.

The third reason for Billy's tragedy is his role in a changing society. He comes from Modero, where like the town itself, values are traditional. Loyalty is expected. The gunsmith

tells him that the Mexican people know he is there but they will not betray him to Garrett. Modero is the place where Billy instinctively retreats to when he is wounded, where he can honestly claim to have friends, the gunsmith and his wife Celsa. But as Celsa observes of Billy 'Wherever he goes – pain'. It is the revelation of his affair with Celsa that finally alienates him from the gunsmith and Modero, where he has broken the code of friendship. It is at this moment that he has to make his decision that he chooses to defy his legend and be shot.

Modero has to be contrasted with the new city of Lincoln. That it is *a new city* is emphasized by the director's choosing to superimpose exactly that title over the first shot of the town providing what appears to be superfluous information but is, in fact, a vital statement about the role of the new urban life in the film. By his isolation, by his desire to revenge a death that the new society would accept he sets himself apart. Since, too, his motives for revenge are inadmissible to that society – he 'liked' Tunstall but was not his 'kin' – he can only become more and more at odds with the new order. But ultimately it is his crimes against Modero that weigh against him. Moon is killed and the amnesty broken but Billy can escape punishment from the new society. The shooting of Hill at the wedding in Modero is an affront to different values and cannot go unpunished.

Garrett opts for Modero and upholds its values but Moultrie represents the new society. His relationship with Billy can be interpreted as being homosexually motivated but this is a less important aspect of the relationship and certainly not unique in the film since there is a homosexual camaraderie between Billy, Tom and Charlie. Moultrie's main function is that of a sycophant who encourages Billy to become a folk-hero, who collects the gory photographs and spreads the tales to fill the comics featuring the legend of Billy the Kid. Through Moultrie Billy is first exploited and then destroyed. When the real Billy is seen not to be the cult-figure that the new society needs, when he turns on his 'creator' Moultrie and humiliates him, Moultrie betrays him. Society wants only to preserve its myths.

Billy has gained knowledge at the end of *The Left Handed Gun*: that killing does not provide happiness. This is a banal truth on which to end but throughout the film Penn has been concerned not with how Billy achieves salvation but with the 'spiritual' journey and the struggle that precede the achievement of any self-awareness. He has introduced

the central figure of his subsequent films: the innocent at odds with the world, the outsider who is both attractive and repellent to society and is consequently its hero and its victim.

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#### THE LEFT HANDED GUN

Warner Bros. Pictures, 1957. A Haroll Production, *produced* Fred Coe, *directed* Arthur Penn, *screenplay* Leslie Stevens *from a play by* Gore Vidal, *director of photography* J. Peverell Marley, A.S.C., *art director* Art Loel, *film editor* Folmar Blangsted, A.C.E., *music* Alexander Courage, *ballad* William Goyen and Alexander Courage, *sound* Earl Crain, Sr., *set decorator* William L. Kuehl, *costume design* Marjorie Best, *make-up supervisor* Gordon Bau, S.M.A., *assistant director* Russ Saunders. Running Time: 102 mins. (16 mm.), 87 mins. (35 mm.). *Cast* PAUL NEWMAN: William Bonney, LITA MILAN: Celsa, JOHN DEHNER: Garrett, HURD HATFIELD: Moultrie, JAMES CONGDON: Charlie Boudre, JAMES BEST: Tom Folliard, COLIN KEITH-JOHNSTON: Tunstall, JOHN DIERKES: McSween, BOB ANDERSON: Hill, WALLY BROWN: Moon, AINSLIE PRYOR: Joe Grant, MARTIN GARRALAGA: Saval, DENVER PYLE: Ollinger, PAUL SMITH: Bell, NESTOR PAIVA: Maxwell, JO SUMMERS: Mrs. Garrett, ROBERT FOULK: Brady, ANNE BARTON: Mrs. Hill. The 16 mm. version is available from Warner-Pathe, 135 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

## Editing Anderson's 'If . . . .'

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### David Gladwell

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Documentary and Feature film production manage to keep significantly apart within the film industry. Technicians in all the grades generally stay on one side of the fence or the other. The division has tended to become a little less well defined recently. Assistant grades, for example Assistant Cameramen and Assistant Editors, now sometimes move from the one type of production to the other – taking Commercials in their stride on the way. There are several reasons for the division; but, principally, the basic organization of the two types of companies is different. It is usual for documentary companies to retain an establishment of technicians for employment on a continuing programme of productions. Companies making feature films, on the other hand, generally employ freelance technicians for the duration of a current production only. Another obvious distinction between the two types of production is the relative amounts of money available to each. This results in an acceptance of different sets of standards throughout the production process. Sound, for example: frequently, quality which would be unacceptable in a feature has to be acceptable in a documentary. Certainly, film styles have been evolved to minimize the effects of such shortcomings and there are low-budget features, but the barriers still remain.

*If . . .* is the first feature film in which I have been involved after seven years as an editor of documentaries, preceded by two years as an assistant editor. So perhaps it will be possible for me to make the bridge for readers between the small-scale and the big-time. *If . . .* was not, however, conventional 'big-time' film-making. Being directed by Lindsay Anderson means that it is a highly personal work – as personal, if you like, as a home-movie. None of the dozens of artistes and technicians concerned in its making has been able to ignore this for a second. The director, quite justifiably, has insisted upon absolute control to an extent which

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has made it a very unconventional picture to work on, not least for myself as the editor. As a result, I have no impression of having made it into features. The budget of the film was round a quarter of a million pounds but, in the cutting-room, it was like working on a half-hour documentary.

My contract began at the start of shooting in March 1968. Most of the technicians were taken on at the same time, although a number of people had already put in months of work. My work was not really to get under way until after shooting was complete but there was a surprising amount to do before a first editing cut could be made.

The director seemed to be reluctant to discuss the shooting script with me at the beginning, or to talk about editing. This I have since come to recognize as typical Anderson. One is expected to feel, to deduce, to infer, but never to need explanation, even at the basic level when working together. At my first meeting with him, he made it clear that it would be he and not I who would be editing the picture and that my job would be to organize the cutting-room and to 'prevent all the sound-tracks from getting tangled up'. He confided that, being disorganized himself, he needed organization around him. I did not admit to being disorganized myself. Happily, my First Assistant was extremely good at organization and, as that was supposed to be his main job anyway, a workable relationship was achieved when the big test came. I was given a copy of the script which, it was suggested, I 'might as well read'. It was at the second meeting, after I had been told that I had the job, that I was asked for an opinion on the script. It was Lindsay who asked me and the only other person present was the production manager. I replied that there did not seem to be very much in it, by which I meant that I was surprised how little information there was printed in it, apart from the dialogue itself. There was meant to be a hint of respect in my reply for the confidence of the director to work with so little on paper. But the reaction of the Production Manager, after a few seconds of awkward silence, was 'You have just talked yourself out of a good job'. But Lindsay seemed to know what I meant because he explained that he had no interest in detailing camera angles and movements. In fact, he admitted to being unable to think visually and said that this worried him at times (although I wonder whether it did). He also warned me that he had the reputation of being difficult to get along with but we both laughed this off.

For the start of shooting a unit of eighty-five people, plus actors, set off for Cheltenham, the first location. At the same time, I moved into the cutting-room in Bayswater which was to be home for several months. A booking of three weeks for final sound-track dubbing had already been made at a sound studio for a date five months ahead – a deadline I wondered if it was possible to meet. With me in the cutting-room I had two assistants. The First, we were to rely on as he knew the ropes of feature film editing procedure. Our equipment was the same as that used in most professional film-making: a Moviola, a bench with rewinds, a film splicer which uses sticky tape and can join magnetic sound-track as well as picture, and lots of shelf space. There was also a film-numbering machine. This last is a luxury in documentaries but absolutely essential in feature production. All commercial film stock carries edge numbers at one-foot intervals. These are on it when it comes from the manufacturers and get printed through when the laboratory prints the rushes. The numbers run consecutively through each roll of the original stock. No two feet of film ever carry the same number unless one has been printed off the other. Quite separate from these numbers are the numbers which we can put on in the cutting-room by means of our own machine. Again, they are consecutive and at every foot; in this case they are not related to the manufacturer's rolls but to whatever we wish to relate them to on our rush prints. For example, it is useful to have the initial digits of the numbers to relate to the slate number of that particular scene. In this way it is possible to recognize any isolated, cut length of film which might later be lying about. Nothing is ever thrown away – the trims of all the shots used, as well as the complete shots not used, are all filed away by slate numbers. Away with these bits of picture go their corresponding bits of magnetic sound – the sound-track is similarly numbered, to relate it, foot by foot to the picture with which it-synchronizes.

When the rushes (both picture and sound) come into the cutting-room, one of the first jobs to be done is to number everything. That is the boring task of the second assistant. Before that, however, he has synchronized the rolls of sound with the rolls of picture. Each roll needs to be done scene by scene throughout the roll. As this will be material shot the previous day and processed overnight, the urgency arises because the director and the cameraman are obviously very anxious to see the results – the current day's shooting may



depend on it. In the case of *If*. . . with the unit away in the provinces, I viewed the rushes, sometimes with one of the London-bound producers, and then made telephone contact with the unit. The film, without sound, was then transported to Cheltenham for the unit to view at the local Odeon late at night.

We dealt with an average of 2,000 feet of film each day. This is twenty minutes' running time of rushes. The style of shooting is highly controlled in this film: 'old-fashioned' is a term the director would not shrink from applying to it. Each camera set-up is very precise, but without being self-conscious, and all camera movements are carefully rehearsed and executed – the opposite of a 'cinema-verite' style. One direct result of this was that one take of a scene was often almost identical to the last. Frequently, there was very little to choose between, say, three takes out of five. Although at the time of shooting it was the director who requested retakes, when it came to editing, he was the first to admit that there had often been no necessity for them. The super-charged atmosphere on the floor when shooting contrasts with the relatively relaxed situation in the cutting-room and one's responses vary accordingly. Many directors dislike the physical process of directing but enjoy editing. Lindsay Anderson would admit to this situation. In the cutting-room, one has the opportunity of watching something grow and develop. This normally happens in a very limited way on the studio floor.

Continuity Sheets, to an editor schooled in documentaries, are a luxury. They come in daily along with the rushes to which they refer. There is one of these for every single shot in the rushes. They have been typed out by the continuity girl who stays beside the camera throughout shooting. On the sheet is every piece of information imaginable relating to the shot: location, lens, details of all action and camera movement, the number of takes which were printed and the number which were not and why, the differences between takes, and also any particular instructions which the director may care to pass on regarding the use of the shot in editing. It is necessary to keep them filed as they are referred to time and again.

The rushes, having been synchronized and viewed, the panic over for another day, clerical work sets in. This is mainly the domain of the first assistant. Every foot of film must be recorded in a log. The slate and take number will have been

photographed on the front of each scene shot. These can be listed together with the film edge-numbers in each case. With Continuity Sheets and log properly organized, there is no reason why any foot of the 100,000 feet shot should not be located within seconds of being required. No reason, it is true, but we do have some anxious moments at times.

At this stage, with rushes coming in but with little or no contact with the director, it was difficult to discover how much cutting of material I should be doing while shooting was still going on. A visit to the location was called for and so I took a trip to Cheltenham. It was only the second week of the nine scheduled and they were shooting the end sequence of the film. The few journalists who had showed interest in the film at this stage happened to be there. This accounts for the early publicity emphasizing this climactic scene in which the respectable citizens of Cheltenham, in fur coats and Sunday best, are mown down by machine-gun and mortar fire. As all the college exteriors were being shot on location, there was also the sequence in which the Headmaster walks around the precincts with a group of prefects lecturing them on the value of a college education. Several different camera set-ups were called for but were not designed to go together in a conventional continuity. Perhaps because Lindsay felt that not much had been said about the editing, he asked me if I thought the shots would cut together all right. But I did not need to answer. He immediately followed the question by reassuring us both that anything can be cut together in that sort of sequence. And that was about as far as I got on that visit, except to receive the go-ahead to break down the rushes and try assembling together anything I felt like.

Much time was spent during those early weeks organizing assemblies of rushes for showing to various people. These were mainly from Paramount but there was a show for the College at Cheltenham. For each show it meant different selections of material – and always the reels of sound-track had to be kept synchronized with the picture reels. The importance of maintaining synchronization is a worry which stays at the back of one's mind from start to finish of the editing process. Each screening, at every stage in development, is dogged by the possibility – and it can easily happen – that the film may go out of 'synch'. If it does, it will be due to an editing error and will probably last the duration of that reel, making the viewing a very trying experience: Normally, we had been working in something

resembling panic as the time for the screening approached. Often a taxi would be ticking over outside the door while work was still being done at the bench. It never failed to amaze when the show was completed with it all in 'synch'. When all the showings of a particular batch of rushes were done, the breaking down of those reels could begin. All the takes are separated and filed away in cans until they are needed. One ends up with dozens of cans stacked on racks around the cutting-room walls.

It is fairly common for the editor of a documentary film to feel left very much on his own to make the film out of an assorted amount of material. Even when the production has started off with a detailed script, circumstances during shooting will have compromised the original intentions to some degree. The technique of editing at such times often consists of sticking bits of film together until something begins to happen. It can, I suppose, be termed a skill, based upon experience, to recognize the fact that something is beginning to happen and also the direction in which it is going. Very important in editing, as perhaps in most arts, is an appreciation of the value of accidents and chance. One is continually having to make a decision: whether what has just been created by joining two bits of film together is valuable and is to be developed, or is of no value and is to be disposed of in the formation of another attempt. The first try at editing any sequence is usually very unsuccessful and, so, one works on it in the manner just described. On the other hand, there are times when the shooting has gone very much according to plan and on these occasions one starts cutting in a more logical way: an assembly is made of a generous amount of the footage shot, put together in script order but without being specific about cutting-points – that is, allowing plenty of overlaps and repetitions of actions within the scene.

It happened that I received a call from the location that the director would like to see a particular scene cut together to satisfy himself that he had not undershot. The script seemed a little vague at this point and, so, I cut the shots together in an attempt to make something 'begin to work'. The result looked rather unsatisfactory. There was no time then to work longer on the sequence and, so, I had to let it go as it was. For some reason it had not occurred to me that the director might have a very clear idea in his own mind of how the shots should cut together. I learned later of his explosion on viewing my attempt and of his outspoken opinion of



Shot 1



Shot 2



Shot 3



Shot 4



Shot 5

editors; but to me he merely complained that I had made it look like a scene from an Ealing Comedy – ‘far too many cuts’, he said, ‘try putting it together to follow the script’. The scene takes place during the Field Day of the College Cadet Force when the three rebels cause chaos and panic by firing into the tea-queue. In four short statements the script described what happens. It was this simplicity which I had mistaken for vagueness, and it was this simplicity which the director required in his film. After realizing this, my second attempt at editing the sequence has remained, virtually unchanged, in the finished film. I had learned much about Lindsay’s style already and, in everything else we did in the course of editing the film, this style remained consistent. The answers to problems were not always to be found by following the written script but success was nearly always achieved by making the minimum number of cuts.

By the time the main part of shooting was complete and the director was due to move into the cutting-room, most sequences had been assembled in script order. It has been mentioned that there were several takes of each scene printed (of those that were not printed the negative was filed away by the laboratory just in case they should ever be called for). At the time of shooting, it being a colour film, the favoured take in each case was ordered to be printed in colour and the remainder in black and white for the sake of economy. It was the colour takes, then, which I assembled and all to a greater length than would eventually be required. Another director might, at this stage, sit down in a viewing theatre with his editor, discuss with him principles involved in the editing, then leave him to get on with it. At a much later stage, he would return for another viewing and discussion to take the film a stage further. In our case, the director had no intention of being out of the cutting-room for one moment until editing was complete. We had no viewing of the whole assembly but settled down immediately to the Moviola to begin cutting. ‘What would you like to look at first?’ I asked. ‘We shall have to deal with the beginning sooner or later,’ he mused, ‘so why don’t we start at reel one and work our way through’. So that is what we did.

The film was expected to run to approximately one hundred and ten minutes when completed. The script had earlier been read through to a stop watch, scene by scene. The first assembly was twenty reels – two hundred minutes. This is very short for an assembly of everything which is another indication of the director’s close control of shooting. The

next time a screening was called for, by Paramount, we had about eight reels cut fairly tightly and about eight of the original assembly. After that we gave ourselves two weeks to complete this first fine-cut when another screening would take place. In the last two hours before this viewing was booked, the frenetic end sequence was put together and was never substantially altered thereafter, although the details took weeks to finalize. However, at this stage, the film was still far from finished. For instance, it still contained a slow-motion dream-like sequence of boys running to the maternal embrace of the Matron. This was eliminated because it interrupted the narrative flow. There was one sequence which was tried in various places in the film and this was almost left out too until it was discovered how well it worked in one particular place. This is the scene involving the three boys – Mick, Wallace and Johnny – in which they discuss the relative merits of different ways of dying. It ends with two of them giggling helplessly on the floor. Immediately following this is a scene in which the Housemaster is persuaded by the prefects that stricter discipline should be enforced by making an example of the troublemakers. The effectiveness of these two scenes running together makes it surprising that they were not originally conceived this way. There were, though, very few sections of the film in which the order of shots was persistently revised. One that we came back to many times is at the very beginning – the first ten shots of the film. This is a short sequence of boys arriving with cases and trunks on the first day of term. In the illustration, shot number ten stayed fixed because it established the noticeboard which begins the following scene. But before it come: one shot to establish the authority of the Head Prefect (No. 7. He shouts 'Run in the corridor'.); one detail shot of two boys colliding (No. 5. 'Machin, you Bloody Shag'.); one detail of a junior riding astride a trunk; and several shots, all very similar, of boys either in corridors or on staircases. The relationship of the specific shots to the general ones and the order and timing of all of them remained very flexible until the end of editing. Many times we would return to the sequence to try something fresh and each time, I think, we improved it.

The sound-track is a vital part of the film of course. The live sound, dialogue in particular, which was originally recorded synchronously with the picture is kept with, and cut with, the picture throughout. When there are twenty reels of picture, there are twenty reels of magnetic film. In



Shot 6



Shot 7



Shot 8



Shot 9



Shot 10

those places where no sound has been recorded with the picture, the reels are built up with plain film as spacing.

For bringing together all the sounds which would be eventually necessary for the picture, a Dubbing Editor is necessary. He moved into the cutting-room next to mine, together with his own assistant, soon after the end of shooting. In the early stages his time was spent organizing post-synchronization of dialogue. There are inevitably parts of the already recorded dialogue which, for various reasons, are not suitable quality and have to be re-recorded. This is done in a studio with performers speaking the lines while watching the relevant bits of film, fitting the words to the mouths. It is done in short lengths on loops so that each may be repeated until a satisfactory take is achieved. The voice must, of course, fit the action perfectly but it can vary in character and intonation. For this reason it is desirable that the director should be present at these sessions – and he often has to coax the right performance from the actor. By the same system, some of the sound effects are produced in the studio. In the case of *If...*, however, because the original sound recording was so good, less than usual post-recording of both dialogue and effects was necessary. Even so, it is standard practice to loop up everything for the recording of footsteps. All the required kinds of surface are brought into the studio – paving stones, turf, gravel, boards – to be walked, scuffed and run on, to picture. Less specific effects, such as traffic, striking clocks, countryside atmospheres, are obtained from libraries. Most important in our case was for a special recording session to be laid on at a school. Here there were recorded background effects for use throughout most of the film – of boys in corridors, chatting, shouting, whistling; doors being slammed and echoing footsteps, walking and running.

By the time I was in a position to hand over a reel of completely cut picture to the dubbing editor, he had amassed enough material on magnetic film to make up a number of completely separate sound-tracks to go with it. This happened in turn with each of the twelve reels of the film – each had something like fifteen reels of sound-track.

The climax of the editing process is the final dubbing-session. For this, all the reels with all the tracks are taken to a sound-mixing studio. Here, a dubbing-mixer amalgamated all fifteen tracks on to one Master Mixed Track. It is a creative process because, in the course of the transfer, the relative

balances in volume and quality, are almost infinitely variable. Because of the vital importance of this stage, the director, understandably, considered it necessary to assume command as he had done when he first walked into the cutting-room five months previously. It was clear by the end of the first week that the operation would be successfully completed within the three weeks scheduled. A major factor in this success was a psychological one – the Mixer promptly showed himself to be sympathetic to the director's intentions. In fact, the importance of satisfactory human relationships cannot be underestimated in this kind of film-making. When a director is making a highly personal film, he does not want an editor to argue every point with him. All that he needs, apart from an adequate technician, is an ear to think aloud into at every stage of the process. So obsessed with perfection is Lindsay Anderson that even after the completion of dubbing he was still working creatively on it and several cuts were made to the Master Track itself. Ten weeks after dubbing, he was still at work editing the trailer and publicity material. No stage was allowed to escape his control just as, during editing, no cut satisfied him until all the possible alternative arrangements of shots or alternative frames on which to cut had been fully considered. The accuracy of cutting throughout was usually to one-twenty-fourth of a second – that is to a single frame. In the case of static, held, long-shots, this precision might fall to one-twelfth of a second; we would discuss whether to take off six, four or two frames – never, for some reason, the odd numbers. There were times when a decision was difficult to make between the excising of, say, six or eight frames. Occasionally, at such times, I would risk my reputation and our relationship on seven frames – and, as likely as not, it would be acceptable. Perhaps differences of one-twenty-fourth of a second are not detectable; but differences of a twelfth of a second certainly are – and this always amazes me.

# Film and Television: A Main Subject Course at Bulmershe College of Education

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Roger Watkins

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The Main Course in 'Film and Television' began with a pilot group of three students in September 1967; this year (September, 1968) they were joined by sixteen colleagues who will complete their three-year course in 1971. We have therefore only four terms' experience of the course in this college. This article is an account of the thinking and negotiation which preceded the setting of the course, but I give no guarantee that our thinking may not be seriously modified by experience. This is not a map but a planned itinerary.

I must first of all sketch in some of the features of the institution in which I work. Colleges of Education train teachers. They do this by means of a three-year, three-strand course. The three strands represent the main categories in which a student's various course may be grouped, viz:

- (a) Study of various aspects of Education as a subject
- (b) Curriculum studies: shorter courses in subjects other than the main subjects and their purpose is the professional preparation of the future teachers
- (c) Main subject which is studied for its own sake and only secondarily from the point of view of learning to teach it in school.

Roughly speaking, students spend an equal amount of time on each of these three areas in their first two years and then concentrate on Education and main subject in the last year. At Bulmershe College of Education, where I teach, the main subjects available to students when they arrive at college include Maths, History, Geography, English, Drama and since September 1967, Film and Television.

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The first question which is usually put by applicants is 'What use will this course be to me in school?' From the account of the typical college course given above it will be clear that the principal concern of the main subject is not



with school but with higher education. In a sense it does not have to justify itself vocationally. The majority of teachers intend going into junior or infant schools where they will not be specialist subject teachers but be in charge of the general education, development and welfare of a class of children. In their case the main subject whether it is German, Drama, Science or Film, remains in the background; perhaps providing an emphasis in their general subject teaching; perhaps casting them in the role of advisers to their colleagues on aspects of teaching which reflect their specialism. For those going into secondary schools, the situation is different, of course. Students following a junior/secondary course at Bulmershe (there is no purely secondary course here yet) usually teach their main subject if they go into a secondary school for their first post. Applicants to the College who hope to do this eventually are naturally more concerned than others to know the relevance of Film and Television to their teaching careers. The kind of answer one gives to this reflects an essential part of the philosophy and argument for setting up the course and I propose to deal with this in some detail.

The decision to set up a main course in Film and Television at Bulmershe College of Education was influenced by a complex of factors which it would be useful here to untangle. Some of these factors are personal and particular, reflecting a special conjunction of people and chance, others have a more generally applicable significance.

First the personal: As a teacher of English, convinced that the main argument for teaching the subject revolved primarily around the development of the individual sensibility, what Mill calls 'the very culture of the feelings' and only secondarily with the manipulation of language skills (in as far as those two aspects can be distinguished), I was concerned first and foremost with what children read, what they talked about and what they wrote. I was anxious that these three acts of communication should be as meaningful and as rich as possible and not only 'correct'. Much of what happened in the classroom arose out of short stories, plays or poems that we read together. These were uses of English where we were concerned with experiences objectified so that we could share and discuss them. However, it very soon becomes obvious to anyone who tries this across a wide span of ability that not all children share the well-educated, middle-class English teacher's concern for verbal communication and useful literacy. With some classes, other

forms of 'evidence' must be brought into the discussion: music, songs, photographs, film and television.

This then was a starting point. I needed no persuading of the cinema's achievement or potential. I had started film societies in schools and explored ways through discussion of making meetings more than 'film shows'. The demand and the resources came together and I began to experiment with film. My first personal battle was with the concept of 'discrimination' which, rightly or wrongly, seemed to me to mean discrimination *against* film in favour of a more 'respectable' form. If I had taught literature positively with reference to the best which has been thought and said, then it seemed logical to concern myself *not* with films which I could 'prove' in the classroom were worthless simply in order to point to the virtues of reading or going to the theatre but with films which stretched young minds and extended young sensibilities more than books were ever likely to.

Then began a process of 'education for teaching', to equip myself with the knowledge and skills that I needed to tackle this task. Clearly it was no use relying on the memories of my university film-going or even on my regular visits to the cinema alone. There were far too many questions to be answered: Should the course evolving in my mind be regarded as an adjunct to the teaching of English or as a study of Film? Was I concerned with using films as 'evidence' in the way in which one quarries from literature or with the 'craft' of the movies or with something else? What was the place of film-making as a practical activity?

At about this time I moved from being Head of English Department in a large comprehensive school to a post at Bulmershe College of Education. This complicated matters in some ways but also by allowing me to shed some of the multifarious responsibilities of a head of department gave me a chance to plan and experiment in a variety of different school situations. It also focused my attention on the need for giving the English teacher in secondary schools special training in the uses of the cinema. I was already convinced that it was not good enough to add this as something hung on to finished structure in the way that some recent books of materials for the English teacher have done. If this sort of teaching was to be done properly then it would have to be done from the *inside*, by someone who knew what the cinema was about, how it worked and who would have touchstones

and standards which were other films and not books. What was evolving was either a major optional course within main English at Bulmershe or a new main subject course altogether. The Academic Board of the college decided that the time was ripe for the second of these alternatives.

Here some of the other factors in the situation, apart from my own commitment, can be mentioned. Bulmershe College was then three years old. The head of the English department was and is sympathetic to the importance of film. The Principal gave it his blessing. Our external examiner in English and chairman of the English Board of Studies appointed by Reading University was enthusiastic about the draft schemes submitted to him. The University agreed to the setting up of an 'English and Film' Board of Studies which would eventually become a Film Board of Studies. A joint external examiner from the British Film Institute was appointed and the Education Department of the Institute has continued to give the Bulmershe course valuable help and support.

It was decided to run a pilot course by asking a small number of students who were coming to the end of the first year of their main English course whether they would like to transfer to Film and Television for years 2 and 3 of their College career. Three students eventually transferred and stayed with the new course. This was a brave venture for them since it meant stepping from the comfort and security of the known to the uncertainty of a guinea-pig course. A special two-year version of a main Film course was prepared for them and the first year of this was designed to test some of the ideas which I intended to incorporate in the final three-year syllabus.

These were the mechanics of the launching of the course but behind them lay a number of crucial decisions about its philosophy and content.

A recent American survey<sup>1</sup> categorizes the film courses run within higher education in the U.S. in three ways:

- (a) Historical: 'relying on a survey series of films available from the Museum of Modern Art and on the standard film history texts with considerable attention to significant names and dates. A survey approach is often employed examining the significant periods of film making in different countries'.
- (b) Comparative – aesthetic: 'music and film, dance and film, the novel and film'.

- (c) Functional: 'regarding film as a unique art form, requiring no justification, disguise, or excuse in terms of other art forms. Its primary concern is how film (and individual movies) operates, i.e. how it is put together and why it uses certain kinds of content, approach and strategies of structure'.

I cannot claim that my conception of the evolving course at Bulmershe fits neatly into any of these categories. When I describe its origin in a certain experience of English teaching and mention that the course at Bulmershe is offered under the wide umbrella of English Studies at the College, this does not mean that its approach is what the American survey calls 'comparative - aesthetic'. To the contrary my limited experience of trying to teach film in this way is that it leads to disastrous and arid confusion. So much time is spent on defining the aesthetic of (say) music or the novel and determining the ways in which film's aesthetic overlaps or may be distinguished from other schemes that little or no time is left for discussing the films themselves.

The approach called (depressingly) 'functional' by the American survey is probably the nearest to the Bulmershe approach. I would prefer quite a different description. The humble word 'critical' would be nearer the mark, including, of course, within its connotations that aspect of criticism which illuminates, interprets and finally, simply admires a work of art. I seek to extend to the cinema the kind of sympathetic judgements based on knowledge and understanding which we make in the areas of music, painting and literature. The Newsom Report (1963) noted the need. 'The most important and most general use of [film and television] as major means for the mass communication of cultural

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|                             | 1966-1967    | 1967-1968 | 1968-1969 |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Pilot group                 | Main English | Main Film | Main Film |
| 1st Three-year course . . . |              |           | Main Film |

This chart indicates our present position in time.

experiences is not generally dealt with in schools any more than it is in colleges and universities. Little attention is paid to the degree to which film and television enter into and influence the lives of our pupils and to these media as legitimate means for the communication of personal experience alongside literature, music and painting. . . . Just as we have traditionally thought it important to broaden children's response to and experience of literature and music, so we must now offer a comparative education in the most important and powerful visual media both because these media at their best have much that is valuable to offer and simply because communication in the twentieth century is becoming increasingly visual'. (Paragraphs 474 and 476)

It would be foolish of me to deny that the central importance of film and television to the development of young people's sensibilities has not been one of the main driving forces in the establishing of a main course at Bulmershe. In a sense I prefer that it should be so. I believe that the arts compete for our attention and finally win it, *not* because they are part of the furniture of a well-stocked and cultivated mind but because they are essential elements in our development as sympathetic and sensitive human beings. This does not mean however that such considerations should be allowed to dictate the content of any syllabus. Once attention has been won for the serious study of film and television then, in syllabus-making, one must be true as possible to the experiences offered by those arts. In other words it is no good deciding by the standards of (say) literature what film *should be*; it is a matter of finding out what it *is*.

I therefore have tried to devise a syllabus which will allow film and television to be regarded in as many different kinds

| 1969-1970 | 1970-1971 | 1971-1972* |                       |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| —         | —         | —          |                       |
| Main Film | Main Film | —          |                       |
| Main Film | Main Film | Main Film  | 2nd Three-year course |
|           | Main Film | Main Film  | 3rd Three-year course |
|           |           | Main Film  | 4th Three-year course |

of context as possible. Films and television programmes may, for instance, be considered as the personal statements of their makers, as examples of traditional forms, as reflecting a national tradition, as demonstrating the characteristics and potentialities of the media and so forth. In addition, I believe that it is helpful to students who have not had the opportunity to study cinema seriously at school (i.e. very nearly all of them) to explore connections with their more orthodox courses of study. Such connections might well be made with an art course in school which has been concerned with the two-dimensional visual image or with the history of art. I consider it a weakness in our Bulmershe course that we are not better qualified to do this. As it is, we make connections with the orthodox discipline which we know best, the study of literature.

This is where the course starts in the first year. There are two main strands – literary/theoretical and practical. In the first strand we seek to locate the cinema in the continuing debate about the relationship of art to audience. By examining briefly works by Shakespeare and Dickens we seek to establish the way in which the greatest literary art has traditionally drawn on the conventions, stereotypes, plots and concerns of popular culture and subsumed them so that a profound statement is made in terms which are accessible to a heterogeneous audience. In the second strand we invite students to discover the way in which film and television work by making films and programmes for themselves. Each student is required to work on and complete at least one 8 mm. film and has the option in the second year of submitting a 16 mm. film instead of a special study. By the end of the first term of the course each student is expected to be able to shoot both still and movie film in a variety of different cameras and to use elementary skills in the darkroom. By the end of the second term they must complete a short personal documentary film on a subject of their own choosing. It must be emphasized that the function of these exercises is firstly to support the critical work by providing practical insights into the media and secondly to equip students for personal creative work in both college and school.

As the first year progresses students are introduced by guest speakers and visits to television studios and have an opportunity to make programmes with the College's own C.C.T.V. system. Film criticism starts with the short film and moves into an examination of individual major works and then into the work of particular directors, for example Buñuel, Ford,

Renoir and Bergman (depending on the temperament of the class and the availability of the films). The second half of the course is devoted to the study of key periods in the development of the cinema in various countries – the French cinema, post-‘*cahiers du cinema*’; neo-realism in Italy, British cinema since the war, genre in the American cinema.

If you detect in the ‘tone’ of my writing a certain reckless optimism you will not be far wrong about the spirit which is carrying the course along. We are convinced that what we are doing is valuable and relevant, following as it does the pioneer work of Roy Knight with a similar but much longer-established course at Bede College, Durham. I am strengthened by the wisdom of a new colleague, Victor Perkins, by the support of my other colleagues at Bulmershe and by the advice and facilities of the Education Department at the British Film Institute. I am convinced the teaching profession can only benefit by adding to its ranks colleagues who have a special awareness of what film and television have to contribute to our cultural experience.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by David C. Steward in the book edited by him: *Film Study in Higher Education*, Washington 1966.

# The Development of Film Study at Hammersmith College for Further Education

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Elfreda Symonds

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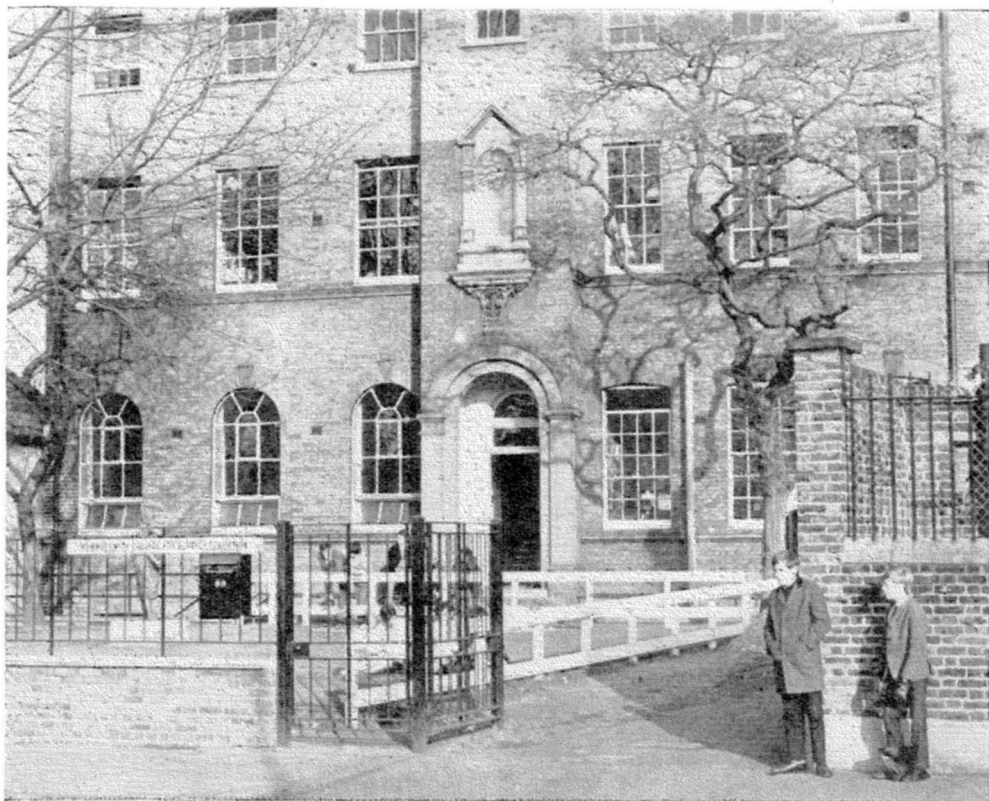
My teaching experience has covered a wide spectrum of education from three-year-olds in a nursery school to 18-year-olds in a large comprehensive school – taking in on the way inquisitive infants and adventurous juniors within the state system and bright 11–13 year olds on the treadmill of a private crammer and straining – often happily – for the academic standard that would yield a place in the elitist public school system. From these I turned to Further Education, lecturing in Social Studies to young workers of 15–18 who were released one day a week to further their education at what was then called a ‘Day College’, a term obviously intended to draw the line between the bad old days when most young workers who wished to ‘improve their education’ had to do so in the evenings.

The London Day Colleges have a chequered ancestry – some of them are direct descendants of the old Mechanics Institutes of the last century. Most of these are a tribute to the forethought and vision of the 1918 Fisher Act which demanded educational opportunities for all young workers long before the employers, the public and the majority of young workers themselves were ready for it. They provide an important alternative route to further qualifications and in some cases entry to Higher Education for young people who leave school early. For those not seeking qualifications it provides the last link with education – an opportunity to sort out some of the difficult problems of adolescence in an atmosphere that is not designed to exploit them emotionally or financially.

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In spite of the promise of County Colleges for young workers made in the 1944 Education Act and the disturbing findings of the report on ‘Early Leaving’ which preceded the Crowther Report in 1954 and highlighted the waste of potential amongst the 15–18 age group compulsory day-release is still a long way off.





‘The dump’

Only one in three boys and one in five girls receive any further education. Those who need education most – the great percentage of average or below average ability, the 50 per cent which the Newsom Report referred to in ‘Half Our Future’ – are the least likely to get it.

What happens to those who are lucky enough to get day-release from their employers? What are they like and why am I writing about them? I intend to answer these questions only in the context of my own experience with the students I have taught at what was Hammersmith Day College and has now been re-christened Hammersmith College for Further Education. The name is new, the building remains the same – a rather grim Victorian pile built originally as a Catholic convent-orphanage, now in the shadow of Lyons’ enormous food factory and a stone’s throw from Olympia. Our immediate catchment area covers Hammersmith, Fulham, Shepherd’s Bush, North Kensington and Notting Hill – a highly industrialized working-class area with its own

particular problems, mainly housing and prejudice over Irish and Immigrant labour. There are five new palatial comprehensive schools in our area and their ex-pupils on first arriving at our building have been known to write it off as 'a dump', before ever sampling the courses.



One might applaud the apparent discrimination over the aesthetics of good building but more often than not the withering and cursory dismissal of all that goes on *inside* the building because of the dismal institutional look of the outside, betrays a prejudice and reluctance to be inveigled once again into an educational situation which might make demands on the potential students.

Not all the students react in this way. Many are lively, responsive and intelligent – glad to embrace this chance to pursue further study.

At one end of the scale there are students who are sensitive and intelligent enough to produce work of this calibre:

## VIETNAM

by Ann Lewington

I turn the knob of the radio  
and an anonymous voice  
tells me of the death  
of some anonymous people  
in a country called Vietnam.

The Stars and Stripes of America  
blow in the breeze  
showering napalm over wide eyed  
Asiatic children –  
anonymous children blowing in the breeze.

And Johnson said  
'Let there be light'  
and there was light  
as the phosphorus glowed  
on the burning bodies of Vietnam.

He told me on my radio  
that he was fighting for freedom  
yet the television showed me  
a land flowing with rubble and corpses.

At the other end of the scale are those euphemistically called 'Reluctant Students' who attend the college not from any desire to continue learning but because attendance is part of their employment contract. My work has been mainly with these. The majority are drawn from the most culturally and educationally under-privileged section of society. In an examination-oriented world their lack of academic success at school has led them to be regarded by many as 'failures'. This is reflected in their attitudes and in the low evaluation of themselves. For some, work provides a new sphere in which they can regain their self-respect – for others it represents only a necessary evil, a combination of boredom and the accomplishment of routine repetitive tasks. Only the pay packet at the end of the week compensates – bringing with it a fresh degree of 'freedom' and independence. They certainly feel no need, or will admit no need, to be further educated. They resent being drawn back into a situation which they firmly believe has no relevance to their new 'adult' status.

Amongst this group these attitudes were expressed by

hostility, aggression or apathy. We cannot escape the responsibility for producing in these teenagers such hostility. At first, any student who attempted to co-operate in the simplest task such as opening a window was greeted with a growl of 'Crawler'. This from the more vociferous gang leaders was enough to halt any comparatively mild member of the class in his tracks and to make him think twice about any future co-operation. Students who showed themselves not averse to tackling a little work were threatened by the bullies; if the 'swots' weren't big enough to withstand physical attack, they might find themselves at break with their heads shoved down the lavatory pan. I need hardly say that this kind of atmosphere considerably inhibits free expression, intelligent discussion or thoughtful written work. One needs to deal with these students with tact, sympathy, understanding and yet firmness. Tolerance and patience is apt to be stretched to the limit. Students who were most actively aggressive were often behaving like this in self-defence as a protection against an educational situation developing in which they would be at a disadvantage. It was chastening to realize that after ten years of compulsory schooling some of these young people were already illiterate or fast becoming so! How could one touch the responses or enlarge the experience of students who were inarticulate and incoherent? Their interest in Social Studies was minimal. Most of these had already cut themselves off from the issues which affected the political, cultural and economic life of the nation. The apathetic students lacked confidence in their own opinions and couldn't see how they fitted into the scheme of things or how they might influence decisions or change the course of their own lives. They accepted the status quo with unquestioning conformity. It hurt me to see what little value they placed upon themselves. Even when there was no raucous opposition from rowdy or violent members of the group, they had great difficulty in expressing themselves. The problem was to help these students towards understanding and relating themselves to the society in which they lived. I don't mean by this that I wanted to peddle life adjustment to what seemed a stark future for many of them, but I wanted to help them to understand, to challenge and to question their values and those of society. But first I had somehow to convince them that the activities of the classroom were relevant to their lives, their pre-occupations and their problems. It seemed obvious that the literary culture which they had inherited had failed them. They could neither speak nor write effectively; they were not

uneducated but, as Bernard Levin put it (*New Statesman*, 16th February 1968), they were half-educated. '— taught enough to know that there is good in possessing words and the ability to use them, but not taught enough to allow them actually to have at their command sufficient words to enable them to sound as they think they should. But the half-educated in that case have been abominably cheated; for the wholly educated can sound as they please and the uneducated can sound natural. Only the people in the middle have virtually lost the power of (to repeat Hoggart's phrase) speech and the assumptions to which speech is a guide. . . . The point about education is that it is compulsory — but why isn't it education?'

The glaring inadequacy of the results of a decade of exposure of these particular students to our meritocratic, educational system was enough to produce in one a paralysis of doubt. It's easy enough to accept in theory John Stuart Mill's definition of education as being 'The culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping it up and, if possible, for raising the level of improvement which has been attained'. Aims, educational or otherwise, only have significance when applied to real situations and real people. How were these young people to raise the level of improvement? What values were they going to pass on? A liberal education at the level of the 15–18 year old at least assumes effective primary education. It assumes that the students have the basic tools of literacy and through these that they can be helped towards discrimination, appreciation and sensitivity. Many students couldn't communicate. Their limited language development rendered them almost incapable of abstract thought. How could we discuss justice, democracy, freedom and responsibility?

Dr. Basil Bernstein has analysed the structure of the limited language forms of the working class. Their speech is related to concrete situations, is repetitive and grammatically crude, much of the meaning is implicit and relies on gesture or commonly held speech-habits. Because of this it is difficult for the working class child to master generalizations, classification or abstractions. Language shapes thinking and the inadequate control and use of language leads to inefficient modes of thought in adolescence. I decided therefore that what these students needed above all was the stimulation to speak and to write, to improve the quality of their language, their imagery and their argument.

Since books and formal teaching had failed I decided to use film for this purpose partly because I felt there would be less antagonism to its use than to more traditional methods and partly because I felt there was more chance that the power of the visual medium might succeed in eliciting *some* sort of response where words alone had failed. These students needed language practice and constant re-inforcement of quite elementary language skills. As Skinner has said 'The teacher as a re-inforcing mechanism is out-of-date', I hoped that film might help to enlarge the conceptual framework of the student. If in the end they came to appreciate film as an art form in its own right with its own conventions, that was a bonus.

Looking at my students most of the claims made for film teaching sounded rather glib. Words were in short supply. 'Communication begins in the struggle to learn and to describe' (Raymond Williams). These students did not want to learn nor to describe and without some form of communication it is impossible to begin to help them. The gap between the experience of the working-class youngster and most teachers raises suspicion and misunderstanding on both sides. Watching a film together at least provides a shared experience, a valid and immediate experience, perhaps a starting point. By examining the values of the film together I thought I might help the students look at their own attitudes (See *Screen Education*, July 1967). It sounds an easy solution – but there were difficulties.

At first I was allocated two one-hour periods a week with 'non-target' difficult students. One of the more articulate – a builder's mate – described himself in this way:

'Other people make me feel inferior – this is 50 per cent inside me and 50 per cent what other people do to me. I don't know why I feel like this. I hope I grow out of it.'

A construction student wrote:

'I like to think I'm clever – but I'm not really. I am nearly 5' 7" tall. I have dark grey eyes, fair hair and am heavy but look on the skinny side. At times I have quite a spotty face. I keep going to the hospital or the doctors for treatment but my skin never seems any better. I pretend that the spots don't bother me but they do really. My girl friend says she doesn't mind. She's a good 'un.'

One GPO Messenger wrote:

'If I want advice on any subject, I don't consult my parents. I feel that a lot (though not all) of the older generation are completely out of touch with my generation. I would not ask my mother for advice on personal problems because she doesn't understand me. I believe that's the trouble with most parents. Nearly all teenagers are happy to get away from their family, and the most depressing time for them is Christmas when they have to stay with their families. Nowadays most teenagers prefer to take their holidays apart from their parents and when they're at home, their most prized possession is the record player and the bedroom. I do know some of my friends who won't eat with their family. For the future I see only complete distrust and disgust in my generation and for Society as a whole.'

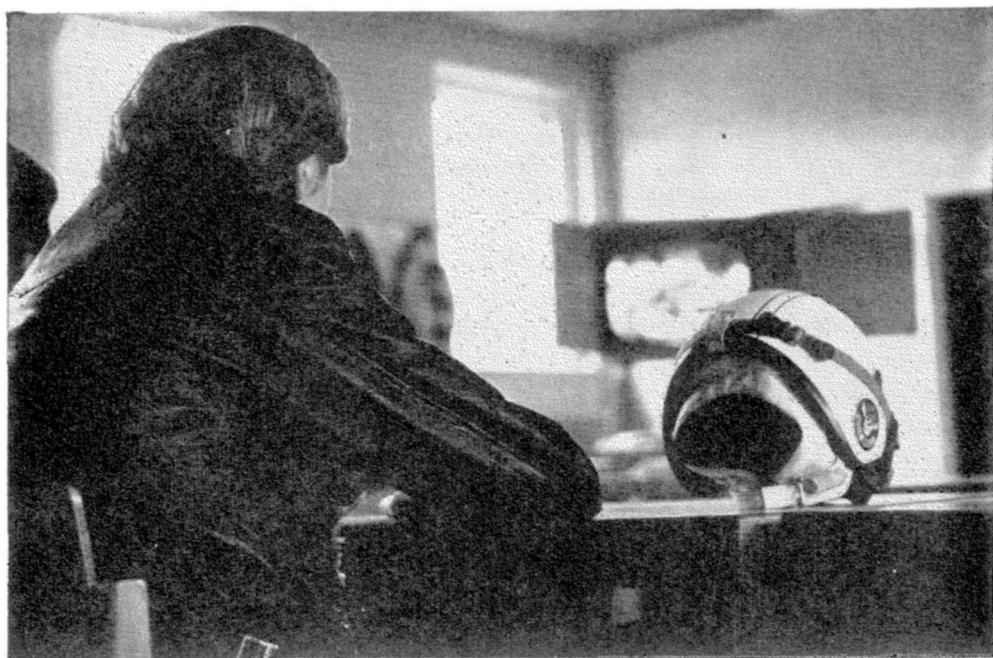
And in case he had revealed too much of himself and to convince us that we shouldn't take him seriously he added as a PS:

'I still don't see why Chelsea is not top of the league!'

A Gas Board apprentice wrote:

'Crime pays because when you steal something you feel good because you got it for nothing. I am 16. I have been in trouble with the police 3 times. The first time it was not my fault, but the other two it was. I go out of my home on a Friday night and come back in Sunday night, mostly I live with my brother, but sometimes I live with my Mum and Dad.'

There were other problems. I had a projector and a converted cloakroom but at first no money for films! After two terms continuous diet of sponsored films – good though some of these are – I was heartily sick of both the hard and the soft sell and the more intelligent students thought they were being 'got at'. The rest revealed that they had only chosen to do 'Film Appreciation' because they thought it was the softest option. The attraction had been the possibility of a kip in the dark or a surreptitious smoke. When asked to think, discuss or write about what they had seen, they were outraged. 'We didn't think we'd have to work', they complained. 'Work' was equated with the smallest intellectual effort and when asked to write, the reaction was such that a casual observer might have assumed they were being asked to write in their own blood!



A student watching  
a recent programme  
on The Cinema

The cinema is nothing special to these youngsters. It's just part of the scene. 'A place to take your bird on a wet night'. 'Somewhere to go for a giggle'. They expected very little for their 4s. 6d. and most of their film viewing was haphazard and uncritical; a lot of it forgotten almost before they had left the cinema.

It obviously needed something very controversial to rouse interest. For this reason and because it was economical I booked the British Film Institute's study-kit *Look Back in Anger*. The character of Jimmy Porter is challenging enough to raise discussion from a small group. This was five years ago. At the time my students made comments on several aspects of the film, especially disillusion after marriage – a subject most of them felt they knew something about.

This was followed by *The Room at the Top* extract. They yelled their displeasure when the scene stopped suddenly and left them in a no-man's-land of heightened emotion. They weren't at all interested in considerations of style or motivation but were hell-bent to know what happened next. At this stage it became obvious that extracts were quite unacceptable to them. They demand a degree of concentration – sophistication and intelligence that was conspicuously absent from my first groups. Later – much later – when the



courses became established and each year had its helpful nucleus of old hands who really *wanted* to do Film Appreciation, they were accepted quite well, but the first year they were howled down. Even early Chaplin comedies left them absolutely untouched. They were not going to co-operate by laughing!

*Twelve Angry Men* succeeded with them when Chaplin failed. It was very different from their normal film diet. I talked a little about it first. 'No birds. What sort of a film do you think that is?' they growled – but they became interested in spite of themselves. For the first time comment came easily. Even the apathetic showed slight signs of interest. We discussed racial characteristics, prejudice and standing against a majority because of one's own idea of justice. 'I'd chicken out of it', said one with sudden honesty. The defences were gradually being lowered. I posed the question of what might have happened if the character played by Henry Fonda had thought the boy was guilty? They were quite intrigued. This raised so many questions. Was trial by jury the best way? Did it have its weaknesses? We decided to see a jury at work and shortly visited the Old Bailey. Those in the group who had seen the inside of the local magistrate's court for reasons other than Social Studies blossomed with expertise about the fuzz and the nick. Lurid tales were told within the 'them and us' framework. However, even they were impressed by the solemnity of the proceedings and the quite meticulous care which reduced a sensational case to the tedious examination of minute detail. The case went on and on; the search for truth was relentless; it demanded concentration. Some became bored – one fell asleep – but the rest hung on and were able to compare the sensational press report with the court proceedings. For the first time they were making comparisons and connections. They were talking.

I realized that if the course was to be successful for them they must be involved especially in the choice of film. It was necessary to keep a balance between my taste in films and theirs. It was important that they saw not only what I wanted them to see but also the sort of films that were interesting and enjoyable to them. I could see the educationalist's temptation to talk too much, to theorize for too long, to provide too little film and too much 'appreciation'. As far as the students were concerned, this could be the kiss of death.

Since I couldn't show extracts, one period was too short. I managed to get the period extended and fortunately the canteen made enough profit to subsidize the hiring of some feature films. In addition I arranged a visit in college time to a film of their choice. This has since become an established part of each term's programme and is important because it provides a link between what we are doing in college and their normal film going. It also underlines the fact that the college authorities think going to the cinema is worthwhile. The students argued and expressed opinions about what was *worth* seeing and finally decided on *West Side Story*. Reserved seats in a huge, half-empty cinema at first produced some wild, noisy and nervous behaviour but they quietened down at once when the film started. They seemed to enjoy every minute of it but made a noisy exit during the credits. 'Credits?' they said surprised. 'What are they?' 'Oh! We never look at them.'

They seemed to think a film appeared almost as an act of God! One of them writing about a film of her choice, *Plague of the Zombies*, said 'It didn't have a proper meaning. It seemed something that just came along and was made into a film!' I used the BFI films on the work of the Director, David Lean, and the Producer, Sam Spiegel, to try to show them that film didn't get into the can by magic. It was the end result of an individual's choice – of story, shot, star and style. I pointed out that the director was showing us one way of looking at a character, situation or problem – not necessarily the right way or the only way but *his* way. The film revealed his attitudes and could be used as a challenge through which students might consider their own attitudes. There was a flicker of interest. Resistance was breaking down.

Some of the students fancied themselves as rebels, so I took the theme of the rebel as the link in the next term's work.

*Rebel Without a Cause*, *The Angry Silence* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* made up an exciting programme followed by a presentation of 'Rebels *with* a Cause', CND and the Committee of 100. A young friend who'd taken part in the San Francisco to Moscow march for peace talked about his form of rebellion. He was close to their age and had a forceful personality. Some students thought he was 'nuts'. He and the films they had seen questioned the whole process towards conformity and the demands of our society. One of them wrote later:

'The film I liked best this year was *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* because it gave you something to think about. You had to work out for yourself why he was like he was and why he did what he did.'

Hardly a flight of Miltonian prose but an improvement on his first piece of written work.

In the beginning if the students talked or wrote about the films they had seen they felt it was sufficient to supply a somewhat garbled version of the plot on the lines of, 'Well, there was this 'ere bloke and he met this girl and she asked him to pinch the jools – and then – and then – and then'. Later they began to comment on the credibility of the characters, to try to analyse their motivation and the director's intentions. In trying to help them understand the films and through them to understand themselves one was constantly reminded of their limitations and the real struggle to express themselves which their comments revealed. For instance, after seeing *The Knack* one girl wrote:

'I like a little fantasy in films because it can be quite amusing, but if there's too much it makes it all too jumbled up and uninteresting *because you can't keep up with it.*'

I was heartened to read:

'There were, I think, some serious ideas in *The Knack*, for instance, the shots of all the identical girls. I think this was trying to warn us off of being just types, not individuals.'

Another girl wrote:

'I think the director of *The Knack* was trying to show us that Tolan was perhaps a bit perverted as his face showed real pleasure when he took the whip to frighten Nancy. He was at his best when he was domineering someone – mainly women.'

Even the most limited students began to make comments that were more meaningful than their first efforts. Of course the language was simple but at least there was something in the statements that could be discussed, e.g.:

'I liked Mae West in *The Love Goddesses*. She was common in a nice way and she made sex seem funny.'

Remembering the students' reaction to *Look Back in Anger*, we went on from the Rebel to the theme of personal relationships and a term of social-realist films followed: *A Taste of*

*Honey, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, The Kitchen, This Sporting Life and A Kind of Loving*. The students chose *The Wild Ones*. They were absolutely mystified about the banning and had expected something much wilder as a result. It raised the question of censorship – of films, of violence and of morals.

Students were more concerned about personal relationships – not just on the boy meets girl level but relationships at work and at home. Through these films they were able to discuss situations that were sometimes too painful for them to raise directly but they could hide behind the character if they wished and probe the situation at one remove. It helped them to be a little more objective. There is no doubt that educational institutions today are expected to be multi-functional – no longer concerned only with the passing on of knowledge but expected to fulfil some of the functions previously the preserve of parents and organized religion.

One of the things that is quite distressing – though considering their lack of education not surprising – is the amount of prejudice shown particularly on the subjects of race, class and homosexuality. Films can do a great deal towards helping them examine their own prejudices. The sensitive portrayal of Geoff in *A Taste of Honey*, the boy who was more interested in the expected baby than the teenage mother was, first produced shouts of ribaldry but by the end of the film and in discussion afterwards it became clear that some of the boys were touched by the character.

‘Geoff was really a soft-hearted lad, with a feeling for life’, said one.

For the first time we were able to discuss homosexuality. Later I showed *The Victim* and *The Leather Boys* and there was no doubt that the attitude within the group had changed. At this stage it was helped by two changes. The introduction of girls into the groups and the acquisition of the caretaker’s ancient flat. The arrival of the girls and the re-organizing into mixed groups had a civilizing effect on the boys – not immediately of course. Before the boys adjusted to the different standards of behaviour which the new situation demanded, several girls abruptly terminated their studies rather than ‘share lessons with those roughnecks’. I regretted this loss but, in the end, the girls who stood up to the boys’ barracking helped to tame, charm or quieten their noisy arrogance.

Shifting into a new environment helped. We moved in as the caretaker moved out. The flat was old, dirty and dilapidated. A grim stone archway and a rickety wooden stairway led up to three rooms each lit by one naked light bulb. My classroom had once been the caretaker's bedroom. In the eighteen months we were waiting for the place to be converted, I thought his choice of wallpaper would drive me mad. Red roses of a particularly ghastly hue and some of these climbing upside down screamed at the yellow paintwork and finally haunted my dreams. The ceilings needed plastering – there were holes – marvellous stiletto traps in the floorboards. The students *should* have revolted. I secretly wished they would show some spirit, place some value on themselves, rise in a body and say to me 'How dare you put me in this place?' but they are not used to demanding the best conditions for themselves and acquiesced without protest to taking their lessons in such conditions. As so often happens, when there is good reason for them to rebel, they don't murmur but make a great fuss over some triviality. Some even liked the dirt. They said it made them feel more at home! I survived it with the knowledge that time, the local authority and the contractors were scheduled and committed to converting it into a well-equipped English and Social Studies Workshop. The kitchen became a visual-aids storeroom, the lavatory a small dark room, the living-room and two bedrooms changed out of all recognition. Between them they were equipped with built-in store cupboards to our own specification and supplied with a generous supply of visual aids equipment. There were no desks but chairs with note-taking arms and simple easy chairs that could be re-arranged quickly for informal group discussions. Modern wallpaper and bright curtains helped to create a bright, friendly, relaxed atmosphere. The institutional classroom had gone.

The students returned hesitantly – 'Is it for us?' 'Should we be here?' they asked – hardly believing it had been done especially for them. They were surprisingly articulate about the 'new' rooms. It was good to have a positive response from them. There is no doubt that this environment has made a difference to the students' initial attitudes and this has been shown in the comparative lack of vandalism. They now invade them at break and at lunch times with a somewhat proud and proprietary air.

As time went on, written work in these groups, now extended to cover every day, came to be regarded with less horror

and suspicion. The standard of writing, grammar and spelling was still very low so I had the students' work corrected and extracts typed out. I then pinned it up along with the professional film reviews. In spite of a show of blasé indifference, some of the students were quite thrilled by this simple acknowledgement that their comments were worth reading and we progressed from 'This film was a loada rubbish' to such comments about *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* as:

'Arthur's back-ground influenced his taste in most things, e.g. he enjoyed going with a married woman as it gave him a kind of status symbol to brag about. Doreen offered him a type of respectability and "decentness" he wasn't used to – and he liked this.'

'It's a boring life in a factory. I understood how Arthur felt when I heard him counting the spindles as he made them. "953, 954, 95 bloody 5" – the actual *way* he said it, swearing in between, showed us what he felt about his work.'

'Arthur looked on Doreen as something different. She did not fall for him like other girls did – this made him all the more attracted to her. Arthur felt he had to prove to everybody that he was somebody!'

'Brenda was the bored wife of Jock, a weak man who thought that once two people married nothing could come between them. He probably thought a husband could just act casual to his wife all the time and she'd never mind. What a fool!'

We returned again and again to the work of Alan Sillitoe. I had tape-recordings of his short stories including *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. I showed the film and we listened to the tape, discussing afterwards the effects of environment and the pressures of individual and group loyalty. It says much for the power of Sillitoe's imagery that the students really settled down to listen to the recordings without the usual shifting, shuffling and squabbling. The course then took an unexpected turn. I played a recording of Sillitoe's 'The General' with its haunting theme of Tchaikovsky's Pathétique. At the end, the last bars of it seemed to be frozen in the air. There was something magical about the afternoon. The youngsters were caught up in the story of an orchestra trapped behind the lines during a war, their fate delayed by the General yearning to hear Tchaikovsky played once more. Usually it's almost impossible to persuade these students to listen to classical music. A



few bars and then they clamour for pop but to my amazement one group asked to listen the following week to the tape and the following week were humming the haunting phrases. For the next few weeks we abandoned film and they each chose a piece of music for us to listen to. Sometimes the sessions went on through the lunch hour – usually easy, light classical favourites: *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and the 1812 Overture. The 1812 is not very demanding for a music lover but for anyone whose constant diet is a two and a half minute single it seems to go on for eternity. I was fascinated by their efforts at concentration.

After this I began to experiment once more. Partly as an antidote to the depression which some of them felt about the impermanence of human relationships portrayed in the New Wave films, we went on to explore 'Humour in the Cinema' – slapstick, farce and differing responses to the joke. We began to consider whether there was such a thing as a national sense of humour. How stereotyped could a response be? We compared *Never on Sunday*, *The Suitor* (which they found too slow), *Breakfast at Tiffanys* and *Genevieve*. Comparing unlike things and making connections between similar things marked a step forward in the students' reasoning and it was good to hear them laughing. The Chaplin films they'd rejected the first term they really enjoyed this term.

By the third year many of the difficulties of the experimental stage were ironed out. The course was extended to cover a wider ability range of mixed groups, viewing conditions were far less primitive, money was forthcoming for films and the students' attitudes had slowly changed. One wrote:

'I took Film Appreciation last year and thought that it was really good. I enjoyed most of the films and think that now I understand and appreciate films more. I seem to look now to see who produced and directed the film and if it's a musical who wrote the score.'

In the beginning I'd wanted to show film mainly as a stimulus to speech and writing – as a bridge between the student and the wider world. It became in addition an instrument encouraging greater sensitivity.

Remembering the brief success of the tape-recordings and *The Pathétique*, I began to question in my own mind the wisdom of exposing the students to film as an art form in isolation. In any case, differing personalities need different forms of stimulus.

I began to use poetry, music, literature and art in an attempt to give the students a wider frame of reference and a more integrated experience. I planned a year's course with the central theme of 'Conflict', starting with films which mirrored experiences close to the students' experience. For example, we examined conflict in the work situation through the intensity of 'Men v. the Union Bosses Struggle' feeling in *The Angry Silence* and *On the Water Front*. We compared this with the satire in *I'm Alright Jack* and followed it by readings from Dickens and D. H. Lawrence. We studied contemporary demarcation disputes and watched a documentary film about 'The General Strike'. This led us to a consideration of just how *real* a film can be and a diversion into a very critical viewing of their own employers' recruiting films. It was the students who made out the case for the director being allowed 'poetic' licence though they didn't use that phrase. One group thought their employers had given a false and glamorous picture of their job and they began to make an 8-mm. film of what was really entailed in their working day. The result would not have made a good public relations job but it was an example of creative co-operation I would never have believed possible in the early days.

The rest considered the place of the documentary film, particularly the work of Edgar Anstey. They wanted to know exactly how a film was made and I used two shorts, *Do It on the Whistle* which is a portrait of Richard Brooks at work on *Lord Jim* and *The Intruders* made on location during the shooting of *The Victors*. They were very well received.



We continued the consideration of conflict between different classes of people and sexes as shown in *The Servant*. We looked at the conflict between justice and the law in *Strange Incident* and *Twelve Angry Men* and went on to think about the conflict of ideologies and personalities in *The Manchurian Candidate*. I followed this with selected readings from J. A. C. Brown's 'Techniques of Persuasion' (Penguin Books) and, after I'd read parts of 'The Hidden Persuaders', we found ourselves looking at the International award-winning advertising films really critically.

Finally, we examined conflict between men at war. Starting with two short films I contrasted the Agincourt scene from *Henry V* showing war in all its colourful pageantry with *Short Vision*, an animated cartoon showing the insidious horrors of an atomic war. The first extract roused them – the second stunned them. They stamped their feet in tune to the charge at Agincourt but some of the 'hard-nuts' turned their faces from the screen at the disintegration of human life shown in the second short. There was really heated arguments about the interpretation of *Short Vision*. The unidentified shape which came out of the night sky was seen as '– a biblical warning', 'a bomb', 'the day of judgment', 'a representation of a political argument'. The false security of the opening shot through a bedroom window and the sleeping innocence of the victims raised the issue of the morality of warfare. I followed this by two powerful 'anti-war' films – *Paths of Glory* and *King and Country*. The impact of these films was so great that on both occasions the class sat in complete silence for some seconds at the end – a very unusual occurrence since the end synchronized with the ringing of the dinner bell. The experience was so complete that discussion immediately afterwards seemed out of place – they just filed out of the classroom and no one said a word. One has to be sensitive enough to know when to talk. In both these instances their involvement had been so great that to have broken into the silence with points for discussion would have been an invasion into their privacy. Later they wrote:

'It was a very emotional film and by the end you are sorry for the soldier on trial. To my mind it was quite wrong to shoot him.'

'The film showed the appalling conditions the men of the First World War lived in and to my mind they were

so bad I couldn't blame anyone for deserting let alone this man that had emotional problems as well as that of surviving. Anyone who has to spend 3 years in mud and dirt and who finds out his wife is going round with another fellow has a right to give up. It showed he had cracked under the strain.'

'Private Hamp was not the only man to crack up. Everyone seemed to be tense and frightened. Even in their dreams they imagined being blown to bits and to tease a man in his last hours of life showed just how pathetic these men were and perhaps they really couldn't be blamed themselves.'

'I thought it was very moving when he is shot and falls back into the mud which was one of the main things in the picture. It began in the mud and it ended in the mud. This was not my usual type of film. It left me feeling depressed – *but it made me think.*'

I followed this up with readings from the poetry of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke and Herbert Read. On the whole the schools don't seem to have left these students with much feeling for poetry. They tried their hand at writing poetry. One boy refused at first. He said the only poem he'd ever remembered was Christopher Robin. After *King and Country* he wrote clumsily but for the first time creatively.

'7125093 C. ROBIN

The bullets missed the Private's ear  
His belly was empty  
He'd got no beer  
The mud squished in  
Through his puttees  
The Officer's boots reached up their knees  
The Officers stood  
All drinking gin  
The batmen brought their blankets in  
The private swore with all his might  
Ordered over the top in a watery light  
The officers stood all drinking gin  
But *they* didn't fight.

The private pressed on through the mud  
Slipping and slopping wherever he stood.  
The general in his army gear,  
Told them 'England will be proud of yer'  
The bullets missed the private's ear,  
But caught his 'ead.  
The Private's dead.  
Bad show! The polished General said  
But *he* didn't fight.'

Patrick, who wrote this 'poem' was the college judo champion, so it was a bit more difficult for the others to write off poetry as being cissy after that. In fact we all found ourselves discussing the implications of Patrick's poem, the outsize chip on Patrick's shoulder, his acute class consciousness. I don't think I could have got through to Patrick without the film.

I played the record of the musical 'Oh! What a Lovely War!' and instead of going to the cinema at the end of term we went to see the show. The following term we watched a series of films which again highlighted the futility of war and the conflict of personalities and relationships under stress. By this time the students were really trying hard to understand the characters and to examine their motives less superficially. One wrote of the German colonel in *The Train*:

'I think he was a kind-hearted man deep down. He was dedicated to his work as a soldier and a man. I think he hated killing the French but it was his job. He had his orders but he admired them (the French) because they were persistent.'

and another said:

'Colonel Von Walhein was played by Paul Schofield and was played very well. He was a very strict officer in the German army and he thought more of Germany as a country than the people in it. He would go to any lengths to have his orders carried out including shooting a fellow officer. He devoted his whole life to the German army and was prepared to die for it. He realized the worth of these French paintings and would stop at nothing to get them moved to Germany.'

One boy showed a remarkable insight into the characters and the theme of the film. He wrote:

'The leader of the French resistance stays behind after the Germans have gone and so does the German leader. They meet by the boxes of paintings and the German officer takes away the pleasure of winning from the French leader by telling him he doesn't realize the value of the paintings and Labiche (the French leader) replies by mowing him down with his machine gun, fully realizing that he was right.'

However, only a minority could accept the fact that a train-load of French Impressionist paintings were considered to be worth fighting and dying for. We spent the next week at the Courtauld Gallery looking at the French Impressionists. Some of these young Londoners had never been inside an art gallery. They hated the silence. For them it was a novel if not an inspiring visit. One or two enjoyed it. In the following weeks I showed a film on Goya's black paintings and one on Picasso. In the meantime I had enough photo-copies made of Picasso's 'Guernica' for them to have once each and I managed to get a large reproduction of it to hang in the classroom together with small reproductions of Goya's and Picasso's work. For the first time they struggled towards the concept of film as an art form and the acceptance of the idea that the artist and the film director have something special to say. When I talked about the contribution of the creative artist, poet, writer, musician, film-maker and drew upon examples we'd touched on in the course I began to feel that they at last understood what I was talking about. In the beginning they could only think of film in terms of either the star or the story. Now they were struggling towards the attempt at abstract thinking. It was difficult for them and they didn't mind!

The integrated experience paid off but it had taken three years to get this far.

'The painting "Guernica" could be compared with the film *The War Game*. They both show pain and suffering, loss of life, children being murdered for something they know nothing about, people being burnt alive, limbs being torn from bodies and victims left to die. The last hope of escape is mercilessly obliterated. To the people who understand this kind of art the conflict is there but to those who don't or won't understand, the painting and the film are meaningless. All they see are people with a painful expression on their faces.'

## FILM AND ART

'Film is a modern form of art. It may be more powerful than paintings in that the actors convey the meaning more easily than if an ordinary person, who didn't really understand art, went to look at pictures. A painting you have to understand more than a film. The artist has more contact with a painting than a director with a film. An artist actually holds the brush and paints the picture, while a director may have more to do with a film than actors, but it goes through many more hands before he gets the finished product, therefore it is not his own personal creation like the artist whose work is his alone.' Margaret Ranger.

'The one way film and art are related is that they both express feelings and ideas through a visual medium.

'At first sight this painting "Guernica" seemed to be a conglomeration of human and animal figures which have been contorted into terrible and, in some instances, ridiculous shapes.

'Once one understands the contortions and its meaning, then the painting shows the absolute cruelty and horror that war brings. From the people and the animals one gathers that they are suffering without knowing why. In this way the conflict in this little village caused by the Fascist planes is horrifically portrayed.' Phillip Rider.

## PABLO PICASSO

'As well as painting he does sculpture, drawing, etching, ceramics, murals, theatre designs and designs for the cinema. The work of Picasso is more than a mirror of our times.

'I think that Picasso is a brilliant painter who can get real feeling into his pictures. Picasso's last paintings were good because he got the feeling of life and death into his pictures so that anyone looking at them should get the meaning. Although Pablo Picasso is 84 he is still painting great paintings and he says he will go on painting until his legs can no longer climb a ladder or a step.' Sheila Tribe.

'Picasso is a very sensitive character; he seems to have retained some major influences from his childhood. He is possessed of great energy and he is a leader in the

search for better ways of expressing himself. His works have a peculiar way of getting across to us what he is experiencing. Even now, as an old man, he is still rich in ideas.' Stanislaw Urbaniak.

If, as Professor Peters maintains, education involves the bringing about of desirable attitudes towards learning, then perhaps some further education had taken place. We had moved from the arrogance of 'Ser loadda rubbish' to:

'I liked Picasso's first paintings, though I think if I took a deeper interest in his work and learnt to understand him, I would probably find his abstract drawings as good as the early ones.'

'I thought Picasso's sculpture erk! and ugly.' (My translation – grotesque.) 'But I think that this is due to the fact that I don't really know enough about them to understand what they are supposed to be.'

Most of my film teaching since has drawn on a variety of supporting material backed up with visits to the local cinema, the National Film Theatre, the theatre and exhibitions.

Last year I decided to go back to the early days of cinema. We first viewed some compilations of early film history and used the anniversary of the Russian Revolution to serve as a link with early Russian film. The students thought the Odessa Steps sequence from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* was 'fabulous'. They began to understand what editing was.

'The most outstanding shot in the sequence is for me the most terrifying, sad one where the small boy falls, shot and is then trodden on. Also how his mother literally goes mad in her horror. Once again this was impressive because of its realism, it hit one across the face. Both the stark cruelty and maddening fearful rush – feet!

'Eisenstein first creates an atmosphere of joy and happiness and then, suddenly, the mood switches to fear, terror and brutality.'

They had begun to consider not only plot, character and motivation but sequence, music, colour and atmosphere. At a very simple level they were discussing film *style*. This was indeed a bonus!

After *Potemkin* they were really responsive to *Ivan the Terrible* – Part 2 (The Boyars Plot). They became quite excited about it:

'The whole piece was marvellous and the subtitles weren't really necessary. The acting and the photography were complete on their own!'

'Eisenstein's use of colour was very impressive and the scene in the banquet hall, the wild dancing and the mummeries really lived.'

'The most interesting shot in the film was in the cathedral for the long shadows increased the terror of the forthcoming murder.'

'The colour was very unreal. I'm not sure if it was done on purpose or not for the bright reds and oranges gave an atmosphere of gaiety and the green faces helped the film to keep its ghostliness.'

'Eisenstein uses blue to show cold fear in the face of Ivan's cousin and this sequence is a climax and also a bridge into the death sequence in the cathedral.'

We then visited the National Film Theatre to see *10 Days that Shook the World* and I subsequently showed what has been happening in Russia since the Revolution through *The Russian Miracle*. A Russian friend came in and read extracts from 'Dr. Zhivago' and met the students in their own time for a group viewing in the West End of the somewhat lush interpretation of the novel.

In contrast, in the second half of the year we looked at what had been happening in America at the time of the Russian Revolution. We contrasted the work of Eisenstein with that of Orson Welles and saw a film about the former and listened to a taped TV interview of the latter. We tried to see these two directors as interpreters of their own vastly different social, political and cultural scene. It was the students who saw some similarity between the isolation of *Ivan the Terrible* and the loneliness of *Citizen Kane*!

'I get the impression from both these films that people in powerful positions don't have any real friends. People are just nice to them if they want to get something done or influence the person in the high position.'

'I think Ivan although he tried to be sufficient unto himself and a public leader-sufficient in himself for the people was still exploited by his "men apart". He was alone and Kane was alone - a man apart.'

When one has finished wincing at the bad spelling and struggling to decipher the poor writing, it is heartening to find evidence of real understanding and insight.

‘There are shots of Susan doing jig-saw puzzles, Autumn, Winter, Summer, Spring. This time Kane appears very old, his wife still young. They stand a life-time apart from each other and don’t seem to hear what each one is saying.’

Often the task of marking was lightened by unconscious humour, e.g. ‘Rita (Tushingham) likes to be in a roll with sex!’ There were flops and failures – and I learnt a lot. I would support wholeheartedly the claim in the Newsom Report (page 155) ‘for the study of film and television in their own right, as powerful sources in our culture and significant sources of language and ideas.’



# Films in Education: The Problem of Availability

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Paddy Whannel

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## INTRODUCTION

The following notes were originally written for private circulation to people not themselves engaged in film teaching but who, because of their function as distributors of films or educational administrators, etc., might be able to help with some of the problems if they were better informed. It is unlikely therefore that readers of this journal will find very much that is new here but there is probably some value in listing the range of problems in a systematic way. In addition a number of issues are mentioned which could well be the subject of longer articles in future issues.

## THE PROBLEM IN A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

This paper is concerned with the use within education of films *not* strictly designed for educational purposes and with two teaching contexts: the study of film as art and entertainment and the use of film in the teaching of the humanities. It excludes the strictly audio-visual aids field.

A wide variety of needs exist ranging from the demands of the film societies and specialized theatres like the NFT Provincial Branches through established courses within education down to the requirements of students engaged in individual research. Within formal education there are three elements to consider:

- (1) *Subject Matter*
  - (a) Study of film as art and entertainment
  - (b) Use of film in teaching the humanities
- (2) *The Teaching Situation*
  - (a) School
  - (b) Further Education
  - (c) Adult Education
  - (d) Teacher Training
  - (e) Higher Education
  - (f) Individual Research

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- (3) *Film Material*
  - (a) Feature Films
  - (b) Short Films
  - (c) Extracts and Special Teaching Material

The problems vary depending on which permutation of these elements is involved.

It is important to see the problem as a whole and to note its complexities. There is not in fact *one* problem. For example, availability in the narrow sense (i.e. is the film in distribution?) is *not* a factor which prevents courses being established, nor is it a major problem at all for the great majority of teachers using film. A wide variety of films are available on 16 mm. for use in general courses.

The question of copyright and physical availability must therefore be seen in the context, of a network of problems only some of which are amenable to administrative solutions, the others involve educational theory and strategy and more fundamental but more long term solutions.

In what follows I have tried to isolate and define some of the difficulties and problems and comment on possible solutions.

#### KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

Quite a number of teachers interested in developing some kind of work in film feel hampered by lack of expertise and knowledge. They are not sure how to proceed in planning a course, of what films to use and where they can be hired and so on.

#### *Comment*

The difficulties here are inevitable and the solutions long term. Most of the work of the BFI Education Department and SEFT is designed to improve the situation.

Two points are worth stressing. There is a need for more substantial forms of training. At the College of Education level two main courses in film study exist – at Bede and Bulmershe, but for the practising teacher there are only two one-term secondment courses – one at Bede and the other at Hornsey. A second application to extend the Hornsey course to a one-year secondment course is being put up to the Department of Education and Science and the London Institute of Education. This would seem to be a minimum requirement for such an important and contemporary form of communication given the fact that teachers can already have a year on full salary to study such subjects as dance.

This of course leaves untouched the separate problem of persuading the Education Authorities to release teachers for such a course – most of them are unwilling especially in the present economic situation.

The second point concerns the use of feature films and a variety of short films in the teaching of other subjects, e.g. within Social Studies, English, History, Religious Education and more specialized spheres such as North American Studies.

The problem here is that this material is rarely classified in terms of subject matter. The Education Department does provide a certain amount of documentation here especially in the form of reported experiences of teachers using film in this way (see Jim Kitses' pamphlet *Talking about the Cinema*). It would not be wise to think in terms of a major cataloguing job here. Rather what is required is a more systematic distribution of information about films that have been found to be useful in handling a variety of different themes and in the teaching of a range of different subjects. In effect we need to enlarge and extend in a more orderly way what is already being done in a small way and on an *ad hoc* basis. The Humanities Curriculum Project provides an opportunity for making a start on a narrow front. It is important however that once the Project ceases to exist the work of extending the range of information and making it available to teachers should continue. In practice this means that the Film Research Officer appointed by the Project should continue working at the Film Institute.

#### THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Another main inhibiting factor is the educational set-up – the time-table structure, the pressure of examinations, etc.

#### *Comment*

These would seem to be 'facts of life' about which little can be done directly. However, the Humanities Curriculum Project could act as a lever towards greater flexibility – the use of feature films for example must promote thoughts about the traditional time-table. The pamphlet *Film and the CSE* to be published in the new year by the BFI Education Department and SEFT is also relevant.

#### THE CUMBERSOME NATURE OF FILM

The size, weight and relative complexity of projectors, the problems of blackout and therefore of time-tabling, the

complications of the hire system – these and other factors, some of them seemingly trivial, are more daunting for many teachers than we allow.

*Comment*

The developments in educational technology—daylight screens, various forms of self-loading projectors, video tape machinery, etc., might help ease some of these problems. But the many intangibles are compounded by commercial pressures. Is it likely there will be a radical transformation in the near future? Will tape replace film? Will 8 mm. replace 16 mm.? Are all developments a pure gain? For example, the type of cassette loading projector with a built-in screen seems suitable only for the short instructional loop. Is this likely to mean a heavy use of such material primarily made in and for America? Are such projects relevant to the use of art film material? Would their wide use diminish the chances of using feature films? If they were adapted for the use of feature film extracts do they provide the ideal viewing conditions?

All one can say is that teachers need informed advice free from commercial considerations. But this advice must be given in the context of all the uses of the whole range of film material, including the use of feature length film and films whose qualities demand a high level of presentation.

THE HIGH COST OF FILM

This is certainly one of the main problems. Films are expensive. Yet it is a problem to put in perspective and it would be useful to have figures relating to other equivalent forms of educational expenditure. In film study there is not only the question of high rental charges but the prohibitive cost of keeping a film over a period of time.

*Comment*

The basic situation is not going to change, and as one cannot and should not expect commercial enterprises to subsidize education, then the money must come from within education. Our main effort must therefore be directed to creating the climate of opinion in which this happens.

Certain special educational rates exist. Is there a need, and is it possible, to rationalize these? Can we devise a scheme with distributors to provide a scale of charges relevant to different needs?

The BFI units were designed primarily to ease the problem of long term loan. Can this idea be extended? Unless a

special copy is struck a distributor is not going to be interested in reduced rates for long term loan on a heavily booked film. Block-booking arrangements also exist. Can we devise schemes involving the LEAs or groups of schools?

Should we think of the system of loan and hire as a permanent one? What are the possibilities of purchase – say by LEAs?

It has been suggested that a select list of films especially suitable for educational use be compiled and that arrangements be made for these to be made available at reduced rates. Apart from difficulties in putting such a scheme into operation the main objection to it on educational grounds is that it limits choice and sets up an orthodoxy. This is also the objection to the various forms of consortium whereby groups of schools agree to use particular films, which obviously limits the freedom of individual teachers in planning their courses. In any case there seems no obvious reason why distributors should go much further in making concessions to education. In the long term one assumes that the work done in education will bring benefit to distributors, but there is no obvious short term gain. We must return therefore to the basic solution of providing more money from within education itself.

#### PHYSICAL AVAILABILITY

The problem breaks down in a number of ways. A great many important films are not available from any source. As has already been noted this is not crucial at the school level, but at the higher levels of education it is crippling to specialized work and makes virtually impossible the comprehensive study of the films of any one director.

Some of the films not available commercially are held by the National Film Archive, but in general the Archive at present holds only a small proportion of the films of any one director and there are many important directors not represented at all. Moreover the Archive films can only be seen on BFI premises and where only one copy is held (which is usual) this cannot be projected but seen only on a table viewer.

There are two main reasons why films are not available – commercial and contractual. Many films have not been bought by distributors because it did not seem commercially worthwhile to do so or they may have been withdrawn from distribution because it seemed that their commercial life was over. Other films have been withdrawn for various

contractual reasons, the rights may have been taken up by television or the rights may have expired and the copyright owners are asking for terms that no distributor will meet. Some of the facts are obscure here and research into particular cases would be useful.

### *Comment*

Solutions are easier to state than to realize. Obviously what is required is for films not normally available through commercial channels to be held by a public agency (the BFI is the obvious one) and made available for specialized users. The problems are daunting and may be broken down in three ways:

- (1) Should 'specialized use' be defined as 'use within education and by individual research students' or should the definition be extended to include 'cultural use', i.e. in the various specialized or art theatres.
- (2) Because of the varied reasons why films are not available, negotiating rights would have to be conducted film by film. This would be enormously complicated and in many cases defeating.
- (3) Even if rights were cleared prints would have to be made and this would involve very considerable expenditure. A commercial distributor will naturally only be interested in spending money on prints if a reasonable return can be guaranteed and it seems difficult to see how such an assurance could be given. The money would therefore have to come from public sources.

Small dents might be made in the situation in a number of ways. Particular distributors might be persuaded to return to their catalogues or make available in limited ways some films of which prints exist in their vaults. The BFI Distribution Library might acquire similar films and the Archive might give priority to obtaining films of important directors. A more fundamental and long term solution might begin with putting into effect the much discussed scheme for the statutory deposit of films with the National Film Archive. This would at least ensure that important films were kept in the public domain. Provision would then have to be made to make such of these films that were not in commercial distribution available for specialized use. It would obviously be desirable that such provision be made part of the original agreement. Such a scheme would call for the expenditure of considerable sums of public money, but then any scheme would.

## CONCLUSION

It seems worth stressing again that the problems under survey are as numerous as the variety of uses and users, that they cannot be reduced to single issues such as copyright and that any solutions short term or long term involve the expenditure of public money.

Substantial sums are being spent on 'educational technology' but the emphasis is on the technology rather than on the education, on the means of reproduction rather than on what is being reproduced.

Two things need to be driven home to the education authorities and other decision makers within education. The first of these is that for the new approaches to teaching, especially in the humanities, the traditional educational film is of little relevance and that teachers are seeking films which have not been designed for educational use and are not to be found in the educational film libraries. The second is the need to recognize that it is in the feature film that the techniques of visual communication are to be seen at their most expressive and imaginative. Artists like Buñuel, Bergman, Ozu, Renoir and Ford are the cinema's equivalent of the great novelists and dramatists. At present no substantial provision is made in higher education for the study of their work. It is urgent that such provision be made, otherwise advances in educational technology will be superficial and the use of film in education will remain at a primitive level.

# Reviews

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## Books

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### HITCHCOCK

François Truffaut. *Secker & Warburg*, 5 gns.

Alfred Hitchcock, having agreed to a series of long interviews with François Truffaut, survives a fifty-hour stint disclosing and illuminating little that could not be discovered elsewhere. He is a master showman, a rhetorical film-maker and interviewee *par excellence* but he remains elusive. Understandably, many will want this book for their shelves. It has its rewards but at the same time it is exasperating.

The sections follow Hitchcock's career in chronological order; there is a filmography, and an inadequate select bibliography. Even at the end of the series of interviews, Truffaut is reverently calling him 'Mr. Hitchcock', still attempting to shape the interviews to a pattern they will not follow and describing films that Hitchcock has not seen (but clearly should have). In this instance, Hitchcock is undeniably kind:

T: I wonder whether you know *Night of the Hunter*, the only picture Charles Laughton ever directed?

H: No, I never saw it.

T: Well, in that picture there was a very good idea that reminded me of your films. Robert Mitchum plays the preacher of one of those secret, strange, religious sects. The word 'love' was tattooed on one of his hands and the word 'hate' on the other. His sermons consisted in a sort of pathetic struggle between the two hands. It was quite effective. When I saw that, it occurred to me that your pictures also describe the conflict between good and evil. It's shown in a great variety of ways – some of them quite powerful – and yet it's always simplified, just like that fight between the two hands. Do you agree?



H: I would say so. The other day we mentioned a slogan: the better the villain, the better the picture. We might turn that round and say, 'The stronger the evil, the stronger the film.'

Review – continued

Undeterred, Truffaut treats us to an illustration from *Night of the Hunter* and proceeds to pursue the subject of moral conflict in Hitchcock's films. But Hitchcock simply agrees with Truffaut to force him on to the next topic. Truffaut seems to lack the forcefulness to compel Hitchcock to lower his façade. It is unfortunate that one of the main points in a late chapter should still be Hitchcock's use of the camera to convey the viewpoint of a central character. It is the one thing that every critic knows as 'Hitchcockian'. It should have emerged in an early interview and then been abandoned.

Hitchcock seems to have developed little in the thematic sense, it is true. A film like *The Lodger* (1926) in which he exercises his own style for the first time, has striking similarities with *Psycho* (1960). To discuss one of his films often illuminates the others. At the same time, he appears to be attempting different technical approaches to achieve the same kinds of effect. If one considers *Blackmail*, *Notorious* or *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (both versions), it is immediately obvious that one of the things Hitchcock is trying to express is the subjective sensations and anxieties of the characters central to his interest. The story, at times, is told from the point of view of the main character. In *The Lodger* Ivor Novello fits the description of a murderer. It is a story loosely based on the 'Jack the Ripper' murders. He enters his newly rented room and notices on the wall pictures of attractive blonde girls and Bacchanalian rapes. Already he has shown nervousness when he hears the daughter of the house and now, as the camera moves round from picture to picture, the viewer knows from whose viewpoint they are being seen. His trembling response suggests an association with the murderer and the shadow of the window which crosses his face like a prison bar, conveys his torment, the consequence of his inability to even look at the pictures without an emotional upheaval. Similarly, in his first sound film *Blackmail*, Hitchcock attempts the same effect by careful and discriminate use of sound. Alice (Anny Ondra) has a boy friend in the police force. On the way home one night she is enticed up to an artist's flat and he attempts to rape her. In her panic, she picks up a knife and stabs him to death. We see her walking home in the early morning. She

walks by a tramp, asleep on the pavement, his hand outstretched, and this immediately reminds her of the man she has just killed. Here, Hitchcock laps the sound of Alice's response to the woman discovering the body. Haunted with feelings of guilt, she clambers into bed, just before a cup of tea is brought to her. Doors are used to cut off sound to leave the audience with Alice. Gradually the audience is shown how she feels. As she puts on her makeup, she catches sight of a photograph of her boy friend in uniform and the associations which she has, make her drop and break the lid of her powder bowl. She walks in silence downstairs and opens a door to where everyone seems to be talking about the murder. She enters a telephone kiosk and immediately the sound of the people outside is excluded. It would have been quite easy for Hitchcock to have shown the box from outside, the conversation still raging, but he tries to create the sensation of her isolation. Again, as she looks through the telephone directory for the telephone number of her boy friend's police station, the words 'Metropolitan Police' suggest to her more that she will be accused than helped and she decides not to make the call. Already the approach of the rest of the sequence is established. She seems to hear only those expressions which are like accusations to her. A customer, boorishly talking about the murder mentions the word 'knife' and she can think of nothing else. Soon the words that were seemingly being said by someone else, ring in her ears and become her own – distorted and amplified.

Truffaut lets most of this slip from his grasp. When Hitchcock begins to discuss the use of sound in *Blackmail*, for example, Truffaut cuts across to a question about trick sequences. If the manner in which Hitchcock builds tension around the main character had been adequately dealt with early in the interview, the repetitious (even dull) pattern of the book could have been avoided.

Everyone knows that Hitchcock repeats, refines and alters his films like a good rhetorician.

I suppose I'm limited to a certain field . . . yet I feel there's still a lot to be done. The phase I'm going through at this time is to try to correct a major weakness in my work in respect of the thin characterizations within the suspense stories. It's not so simple because when you work with strong characters, they seem to take you where they want to go. . . . This has always been a conflict with

me because I require certain effects. I'm drawn by the wish to put intriguing settings in my pictures. Review – continued

Elsewhere, he has described how some of his films develop:

*North by Northwest* came into being because of a sole, provocative idea with which I had long been obsessed. The inspirational sequence takes place at the picture's climax, a unique predicament in which the hero, Grant, was placed before even one word of the script was written by Ernest Lehman.

When we began we hadn't the foggiest how to get Cary out of the mess. Or for that matter, how he got into it in the first place. So we worked backwards and forwards at the same time, trying one thought after another, racking our brains for weeks on end before we came up with the answers.

(Hitchcock interviewed in *Films and Filming*, July 1959)

Hitchcock's approach to film-making has been described in terms of the director asking himself the question 'How would it be if . . .' How would it be if a man were to be shot during a loud passage of music in the Albert Hall? (*The Man Who Knew Too Much*). How would it be if a man were to carry out a murder for someone else and attempt to blackmail him into doing the same for him? (*Strangers on a Train*). How would it be if a priest having received the confession of a murderer and bound by the secrets of the confessional, were himself to be suspected of the murder? (*I Confess*). This seems to explain why the set pieces tend to come in the middle of the film. Although there are some remarkable similarities between his films, Hitchcock is continually striving for something new. The centre piece of *North by Northwest* for example, has been influenced by many traditionally told murder stories. The wide open space, the blazing sun, the dry roads are the result of a conscious avoidance of the dark alley, the wet roadway and the gas street lamp.

Hitchcock's need of set pieces explains why a writer like Raymond Chandler found it difficult to work with him.

While Chandler worried about the most believable thing to be done by someone in a particular situation, Hitchcock always knew where they had to be – a tennis championship, a fairground roundabout – and was concerned mainly with devising ways of making his characters fit the pre-arranged pattern in as few moves as possible.

(*Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1966)

Hitchcock's interviews are as rhetorical as his film-making. It is charming but disappointing to discover that when he speaks to Truffaut of 'surprise' and 'suspense', he is basically repeating what he said in an interview in *Film* when he made a crude distinction between the two.

Take a very simple example: I'm sitting here with two or three people and we're jabbering away, some irresponsible talk about football, and suddenly a bomb goes off and blows us all to smithereens. The audience have fifteen seconds of shock. Now take the same scene and put the bomb under the table. Tell the audience it's there and going to go off in five minutes. Same scene, same dialogue. Look at the difference in the audience's emotions. They say 'Stop talking that silly nonsense'; they're getting nervous. The one thing you must not do is let the bomb off. I did it in *Sabotage* and I'd never make that mistake again. A foot must touch it and the bomb must be out of the window and exploding away. If you let it explode the audience is angry because you've put them through the wringer and then you confirm it.

Whilst Truffaut recognizes how frequently Hitchcock has made the distinction, he asks for it again.

There is a distinct difference between 'suspense' and 'surprise', and yet many pictures continually confuse the two. I'll explain what I mean.

We are now having a very innocent little chat. Let us suppose that there is a bomb underneath this table between us. Nothing happens, and then all of a sudden, 'Boom!' There is an explosion. The public is *surprised*, but prior to this surprise, it has seen an absolutely ordinary scene, of no special consequence. Now let us take a *suspense* situation. The bomb is underneath the table and the public *knows* it, probably because they have seen the anarchist place it there. The public *is aware* that the bomb is going to explode at one o'clock and there is a clock in the décor. The public can see that it is a quarter to one. In these conditions this same innocuous conversation becomes fascinating because the public is participating in the scene. The audience is longing to warn the characters on the screen: 'You shouldn't be talking about such trivial matters. There's a bomb beneath you and it's about to explode!'

In the first case we have given the public fifteen seconds of *surprise* at the moment of the explosion. In the second

case we have provided them with fifteen minutes of *sis-pense*. The conclusion is that whenever possible the public must be informed. Except when the surprise is a twist, that is, when the unexpected ending is in itself the highlight of the story.

It has been refined, it is a little more polished, and slightly more coloured.

The thematic side of his films can be seen as a peg on which he can hang a different coat:

Most people forget that the true function of the film is to put together pieces of film to get ideas. Dialogue is incidental, though we use it naturally. I suppose one of the most cinematic pictures I've made was *Rear Window* where a man never moves from one spot, but, by what he sees from that window, he builds up a whole set of ideas through which he uncovers a murder. The whole story is told in the way he looks and reacts. To show you the pure power of how pieces of film change the idea imagine he looks at a mother nursing a child and you cut back to him and he smiles. Now Mr. Stewart is a benign gentleman. Take away the middle piece of film and substitute a shot of a girl in a bikini. *Now* he's a dirty old man.

(from an interview quoted in *Film*)

Here again the old master is at work, retaining those elements which are effective and presenting points in another way where they are not. In *Hitchcock*, he again talks about *Rear Window*.

It was a possibility of doing a purely cinematic film. You have an immobilized man looking out. That's one part of the film. The second part shows how he reacts. This is actually the purest expression of a cinematic idea. Pudovkin dealt with this, as you know. In one of his books on the art of montage, he describes an experiment by his teacher Kuleshov. You see a close-up of the Russian actor Ivan Mosjoukine. This is immediately followed by a shot of a dead baby. Back to Mosjoukine again and you read compassion on his face. Then you take away the dead baby and you show a plate of soup, and now, when you go back to Mosjoukine, he looks hungry. Yet in both cases, they used the same shot of the actor; his face was exactly the same.

In the same way, let's take a close-up of Stewart looking out of the window at a little dog that's being lowered

in a basket. Back to Stewart, who has a kindly smile. But if in the place of the little dog you show a half-naked girl exercising in front of her open window, and you go back to a smiling Stewart again, this time he's seen as a dirty old man!

Truffaut, of course, allows Hitchcock to ignore the relationship between his work and that of others. He makes no reference to the influence of Eisenstein on the assassination sequence in *Foreign Correspondent*. Nor does he mention how German Expressionism affected the making of *Blackmail*. Since Rohmer and Chabrol wrote on Hitchcock, it has been customary to trace certain metaphysical themes in his work. Many writers have written on this and there is not room for more than a sketch here. There do seem to be similarities of plot. Many of his characters seem to adopt the roles of other people in his films, sometimes taking over responsibility for some crime of which they are innocent. Sometimes they actually take over someone else's identity. In *The Wrong Man*, an innocent man, played by Henry Fonda, answers the description of a man known to have committed a number of robberies. His physical similarity with the criminal is so strong that he is identified by people as the thief. Hitchcock shows the two faces, one emerging from the other, almost as if they were separate sides of the same personality. Some of the shots of the handcuffed Henry Fonda, looking terrified and unable to control the situation emphasize that this could happen to anyone. In *I Confess*, Montgomery Clift plays the part of a priest who, having heard a confession from a murderer finds himself the main suspect. He is bound by the secret of the Confessional not to divulge the real criminal. By not doing so and by knowing all the facts of the murder, he too seems to be not only taking over responsibility for the crime he did not commit but actually becoming the person himself. In *Marnie*, Tippi Hedren has killed a sailor who was brutally beating her mother. Her mother was a prostitute and Marnie can remember nothing of the incident which took place when she was a child. Here the transference of roles moves in two directions. The mother has publicly taken the responsibility for the killing. She has a damaged leg which dates from the incident. She has kept Marnie from knowing the truth. On the other hand, Marnie seems to take over the role of prostitute, identifying herself with her mother. Sexually, she herself is frigid, but she always works for rich men, obliges them in any way she can and then steals from them, as if for services rendered. *North by North-*

*west* provides perhaps the most remarkable example of the manner in which Hitchcock characters adopt the role of others. Here, Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) is mistaken by international agents for an American agent called Kaplan. At first he asserts his own identity. He has documents to establish his real one but they are discounted as forgeries. There follows an attempt to kill him by making him drunk and putting him in charge of a car on a dangerous road. He manages to escape and tries to solve the matter. However, when he calls at the United Nations building to see the person he thinks is responsible for the attempt on his life, he gives the name of Kaplan to the receptionist. In fact, Kaplan does not exist. He is a fictitious character created to enable American Intelligence to protect their real agent. (Hitchcock calls it his best Maguffin.) But although he doesn't exist, rooms are booked for him at hotels, his luggage is moved around, his suits are pressed by the hotel staff. Soon Roger Thornhill is trying on the man's clothing saying 'They've mistaken me for a much shorter man'. Even later when the facts are revealed to him, he is asked to continue to be Kaplan for a little longer and he agrees. By now he has actually become someone else. The film ends with a chase. Talking to the heroine, who asks him what became of his two marriages, he says, 'My wives divorced me; they said I didn't lead an exciting enough life'. *Psycho*, although superb in many respects, provides a crude example of the adoption of someone else's role. Here, the hero, Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), who murders women as a substitute for making love to them, dresses up in his mother's clothes before he kills. By this, he satisfies two urges, his own sexual one and his (or his mother's) expression of disgust at anything to do with sex. In the closing shot of the film his personality is indistinguishable from that of his mother. In *Vertigo* the hero, James Stewart, forces a girl to dress like a girl who has been killed, even compelling her to relive the same events. Finally the girl sees herself exactly in the situation which led to the other girl's death and falls from the top of a tower.

Often, quite innocent people get dragged into the centre of Hitchcock films. They are obliged to play roles which are not naturally theirs. The terrifying situation often stems from two things: some people do not seem to care or believe in the seriousness of the dilemma of the central characters; others believe in spite of the evidence, that they are guilty of some crime of which they are really innocent and that they

are someone other than they are. A good example of the first is to be found in *North by Northwest*, where the two would-be assassins are travelling down in the lift with Roger Thornhill and his mother. He points them out to her. She unbelievably turns to them: 'You're not really trying to kill my son, are you?' After a brief spell of discomfort, the occupants of the lift are rocking with disbelieving laughter. Often in a Hitchcock film, the truth is spoken in jest. Examples of the other are to be found throughout his whole work, but it is worth noting that in *To Catch a Thief*, Cary Grant sets out to establish his innocence of some burglaries which have all his own trademarks. When he finally catches the thief and is holding her by one hand from a roof-top, he forces a confession from her. 'Now let me know who's who and what's what' he says to her, at the same time threatening to let her fall.

Similarities can be found in the confession-like sequences of many films. The agonized end of *Marnie* where the truth is finally unravelled is not too distinct from the end of *Psycho* at one level. And neither is particularly distinct from *Rope* which contrives to make the murderers confess. The film is not an unravelling of a mystery, but a psychological thriller in which the facts are known about from the beginning. Confession sequences appear in other films as well. *Under Capricorn* and *Spellbound* contain them and the disclosures of the East German scientist in *Torn Curtain* have the same tone.

But what of Hitchcock as social commentator? In *Psycho*, for instance, the Bates Motel where the murders take place is outside the town. People seem to deny any knowledge of what goes on there. The facile summing up by the psychiatrist enables everyone to shirk any feelings of responsibility. The explanation which he offers seems to be consciously glib, almost as if to cover up the possibility of this kind of thing occurring in a decent environment or to avoid his own feelings of responsibility. Yet a woman has been shown buying an insect spray. 'Insects or Man, death should be painless', she says, which again suggests the way in which death can be systematically carried out in contemporary society, without emotion, without any real belief that the people being murdered are different from animals.

In *North by Northwest*, there seems to be an emphasis on the ability that rich people have to buy whatever they want. Cary Grant always has money at his fingertips and never



waits for change. Perhaps even people can be bought. When he goes to the auction and confronts Eva Marie Saint and James Mason they talk about prices. He asks how much he paid to get her. The morality of relationships does not seem to count. Hence the intelligence organization is prepared to let Eva Marie Saint sleep with James Mason, even perhaps be killed, for its own reasons. Certainly it feels its cause is more important than either of their lives, or their life together. In the final chase on Mount Rushmore, Eva Marie Saint and Cary Grant cling to the traditional images of American democracy. They have travelled together on the Twentieth Century Express. Although at one level, it is comedy, it seems to reach beyond joking to a commentary on political morality.

Hitchcock is an old hand at it. In *Notorious* which Truffaut understandably admires, he explores similar ground. Ingrid Bergman is forced to undergo many harrowing experiences to prove her love for Cary Grant and her loyalty to the United States. In effect she proves neither because both want more than can be given. *Notorious* and *Marnie* both contain sadist heroes.

Mark Rutland's background contrasts with that of Marnie. His attitude towards money and her struggles all suggest a solid class attitude towards the characters. Strut, from whom Marnie has stolen, turns round at one point and says 'Just wait till you've been victimized' and we are immediately shown Marnie. But victims require persecutors and in this film they can only be provided by Mark and the kind of person with whom he mixes who are all prosperous businessmen. The villain is Mark, just as the villain of *Notorious* is Cary Grant. Both are sexual blackmailers; Mark even owns up to it. Money, it seems, can buy anything.

The ends of Hitchcock's films are also ignored. He jokes about the train going into the tunnel in *North by Northwest* and mentions the delightful irony in the last shot of *To Catch a Thief* where as John Robie (Cary Grant) kisses Frances Stevens (Grace Kelly) he finds that the mother-in-law will be moving in and we are shown his anxious eye. But his general approach is hardly mentioned. Elsewhere he has said:

I always feel the last reels of a film should have a lift. You have the audience sitting there all that time deprived of their social processes, so you need to give them a lift. I've even gone as far as to change the style of acting – to

make it a little hammier a little stronger – because of the length of the film.

It follows that with alterations because of commercial reasons, the conclusions have to be looked at carefully. *Blackmail* had a completely different ending in its original plan and the ending we know has to be understood in this light. The ending of *Notorious* where Devlin (Cary Grant) returns to rescue Alicia (Ingrid Bergman) who is being slowly poisoned, rings false. He has said that he is leaving for Spain. He seems to have condemned her to death. And yet he returns to save her. It seems like a wish, a dream on the part of Alicia, the kind of thing she would want to happen rather than what does occur. Similarly, the end of *North by Northwest* also sees death although it is heavily disguised. Eve (Eva Marie Saint) and Roger Thornhill can no longer hold on to the rock face of Mount Rushmore. She says so and there is a sudden cut to Roger Thornhill now married to her pulling her up to the bed in a railway carriage. There is no explanation or connection between them, merely the hope or fantasy that this could happen. It is more consistent with the style of the film to accept that they do die and that the final shots reflect unfulfilled hopes. It is also additional evidence for believing that the end of *Psycho* is meant not merely as a joke but as a way of emphasizing the reluctance that there is in society to seriously examine its own nature.

The value of *Hitchcock* is that we have collected together some of Hitchcock's best anecdotes, a larger number of new, if, on the whole, minor facts which contribute to the catalogue of examples of his totally commercial style. A sequence from *Torn Curtain* was removed from the final version mainly because of his experience with *The Secret Agent*.

I made that picture in England thirty years ago and it was a flop. Do you remember the reason why? Because the central figure had to commit a killing he didn't want to do, and the public couldn't identify with a hero who was so reluctant to carry out his mission. So I felt that with *Torn Curtain* I would be falling into this trap again through that factory scene.

It is this dedication to the audience that becomes the main influence on his style. It comes out at every opportunity. He slips it in when talking about *Psycho* and benevolently patronizes Truffaut who expresses amazement at its profit. Ignore

the notices, is his advice and design your films 'for an audience'. It is advice that may well have fallen on deaf ears because Truffaut shows no real understanding of Hitchcock's films. The tricks fascinate him and the technical problems, but never the genuine macabre which is as much Hitchcock as the position of the camera in a first person sequence. Somehow the theme of *Psycho*, concerned with what lies beneath the surface of social respectability, never emerges. Truffaut doesn't even develop the structure of *Marnie* or examine the nature of Marnie's compulsive stealing. Hitchcock tries to help but Truffaut isn't having any.

Review – continued

**Kevin Gough-Yates**  
lectures in Film  
Studies at Hornsey  
College of Art and is  
co-editor of *Screen*.

## FRITZ LANG IN AMERICA

Peter Bogdanovich, *Studio Vista* 10s. 6d.

*M. Lorrimer Books* 12s. 6d.

Fritz Lang, one of the cinema's elder statesmen ('the man with the adagio camera') who is currently in self-imposed retirement in Beverly Hills, is the subject of a number of recently published or upcoming books.

Vain by his own admission, he has been disappointed with similar works to date. An intense moody man, he appears more accessible than most for interviews, presenting a voluble series of anecdotes which shed some light on the aura of myth and reality which surround his career. He looks on his work in Germany as the more creative and independent part of his career, giving plentiful examples to Peter Bogdanovich of producer interference in his American pictures, the extent of which eventually caused him to stop working there in 1956.

He acknowledges his debt to comic-strips, which he claims gave him insight into the American character and 'pulp fiction', quoting *Rocambule*, a 1913 French film about a Robin Hood of crime as an example of the type of film which later influenced him. His interest in painting prior to his military service is another known influence, but he is less forthcoming as to the exact details of his script collaborations with his wife Thea Von Harbou, a German novelist of the '20s who specialized in science-fiction and fantasy. As these

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Vain by his own admission, he has been disappointed with similar works to date. An intense moody man, he appears more accessible than most for interviews, presenting a voluble series of anecdotes which shed some light on the aura of myth and reality which surround his career. He looks on his work in Germany as the more creative and independent part of his career, giving plentiful examples to Peter Bogdanovich of producer interference in his American pictures, the extent of which eventually caused him to stop working there in 1956.

He acknowledges his debt to comic-strips, which he claims gave him insight into the American character and 'pulp fiction', quoting *Rocambule*, a 1913 French film about a Robin Hood of crime as an example of the type of film which later influenced him. His interest in painting prior to his military service is another known influence, but he is less forthcoming as to the exact details of his script collaborations with his wife Thea Von Harbou, a German novelist of the '20s who specialized in science-fiction and fantasy. As these

elements comprised the bulk of his German film output, it would suggest that she had a strong influence on them with the exception of *Das Testament De Dr Mabuse* (1932), in which a madman mouthed Nazi philosophy. She was a Nazi and remained in Germany, divorcing Lang when he fled the country in 1933 after Goebbels had offered him the post as head of the German film industry, whilst at the same time banning *Das Testament De Dr Mabuse*. The Nazi propaganda machine later used clips from *M* (1931) in *Die Ewige Jude* (1940, Fritz Hippler), an especially crude and vicious antisemitic ‘documentary’ which cited the Lorre character as an example of a wayward Jew.

After making a film in Paris, *Liliom* (1934), he was signed up by David Selznick and went to America. A previous visit had given him the inspiration for *Metropolis* (1926), a film which he has since repudiated as ‘silly and stupid’. An MGM publicity handout described him as a man of individual talent and many idiosyncrasies. He wore two monocles (since replaced by one monocle and a black patch and, on special occasions, a pair of glasses) and carried a whistle around his neck (a present from the grateful European police at the time he made *M*); he dressed in white from head to foot at home, but on set he wore a variety of coloured sweaters (apparently a habit which he dropped after *Fury*, judging from the illustrations in Bogdanovich’s book). He consumed countless cups of black coffee and ate caviar sandwiches when working, had a mania for avoiding public appearances with unattractive women, was an all-round sportsman and had a ‘flying machine’ in his basement. MGM decided to terminate his contract, but he persuaded Eddie Mannix to give him one chance and was set to work with Bartlett Cormack, a writer, to develop a four-page outline of *Fury*. Lang describes the background to the film at great length to Bogdanovich, stressing how the MGM executives didn’t share his opinion of the film’s quality. He has far less to say about its two successors, *You Only Live Once* (1937) and *You and Me* (1938). He considers the latter an unsuccessful attempt to put Brecht’s *Lehrstuck* (play that teaches) on film. Bogdanovich states in his introduction that the purpose of his book is to refute the view that Lang’s films declined after this. To this end he quotes Sarris and suggests that the American films by reaching a wider audience and with the changing of the hero from the German superman to the American working-man gave this wider and more emotional appeal. He points to the duality

of the themes of *Fury* – the sickness of revenge and hate and the iniquities of destiny—and of *You Only Live Once* – the mercilessness of society and the Fonda character's struggle against it. This duality is echoed in Nicholas Garnham's introduction to his translation and description of the action in *M* where he highlights the key scene of the film as a cross-cutting sequence of a meeting of the underworld leaders with a meeting of police chiefs, both trying to trap the killer played by Peter Lorre. The police in Lang's films are ineffectual (cf. *Die Spinnen*, *Spione*, and *The Big Heat*) but the comment is not as savage as, for example, Aldrich (*Kiss Me Deadly*) or David Greene (*The Strange Affair*). Bogdanovich sees the most consistent of Lang's themes as the picturing of a bleak universe where man grapples with his destiny and loses. Lang's metier is picturing the mentally and physically crippled within this environment. The 'humanist' critics stress the social commitment of his films whilst ignoring the visual aspects, thus missing half the point.

The visual aspects were important in his first two Westerns (bar a spoof in *Die Spinnen* Part I, 1919), *The Return of Frank James* (1940) and *Western Union* (1941). The first of these was 'an interesting assignment' for Lang during which he learnt to experiment with subdued lighting in order to produce colour close-ups but he prefers the second because it was an original as opposed to a sequel to an already successful film. Visual impact was always important to him as he believes that audiences remember images rather than dialogue. In this section he makes the only factual error in the interview, naming Ray Milland as one of the principals in the film. *Western Union* was followed by the first of his anti-Nazi films, *Manhunt* (1941), scripted by Dudley Nichols. In commenting on the film, Lang expounds his relationship with writers and technicians in general and is surprisingly voluble about Brecht and his contribution to *Hangmen Also Die* (1943). Generally, he holds no brief for Brecht.

The idea of duality is expressed by Lang himself in defending the 'dream' climax of *Woman in the Window* (1944). According to Lang, the characters in the artist's dream are people he knows in real life and the audience comes to know them through the dream. He claims it was subconsciously inspired/influenced by the climax of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919). He was originally offered *Caligari* but Pommer took him off it when the first part of *Die Spinnen* was a box-office success and he wanted Lang to make Part II. The only idea

of Lang's which remains in the finished film is the framing of the expressionist core of the film with a normal Prologue and Epilogue. He is quite fond of *Scarlet Street* (1945), the remake of Renoir's *La Chienne* (1931) which has since been made a third time. It had long been a project of Lubitsch but, when he and a team of Paramount writers failed to produce a script, Lang was able to pick it up inexpensively. To the suggestion of conscious stylization of the film, Lang replies that this may merely be accountable to the film being studio bound—a reason he repeats to account for the extremely romantic atmosphere of *Moonfleet* (1955).

Producer interference played a large part in *Cloak and Dagger* (1946). Apparently, relations deteriorated and Lang refused to work if the producer was on the set. A whole climatic reel which was removed from the film (in retaliation?) is described at length by Lang. It is reminiscent in spirit of the series of climaxes in his early German films. He also describes his approach to working with actors and stars, including Joan Bennett, whom he used in four films. She was one of a number of people with whom he 'got on well at first'. His last film with her, *The Secret Beyond the Door* (1947), was an unsuccessful attempt to use an idea which he borrowed from Hitchcock (*Rebecca*, 1940), involving the effect of the metaphysical presence of a dead person on a group of characters. His career hit rock-bottom with *I Shall Return* (*An American Guerilla in the Philippines*), a routine war epic with Tyrone Power. Characteristically, Lang cracks: 'even a director has to eat'.

The situation changed with his next film, often classed as one of the main examples of a school of Westerns known as the 'neurotic' Westerns. *Rancho Notorious* (1952) reunited him with Marlene Dietrich and the encounter was unpleasant for Lang. Several years earlier he and Silvia Richards had worked on a script of *Winchester 73* but the project was taken over by Anthony Mann. Lang and Daniel Taradash adapted a Silvia Richards story into a plot about an ageing (but still very desirable) dance-hall girl and an ageing gun-hand. As shooting progressed, Dietrich altered the 'ageing', constantly losing a few years and she generally gave Lang a bad time ('Oh, look, Sternberg would have done so and so'. 'Well', I said, 'but I am Lang'). Budget limitations facilitated studio shooting; Howard Hughes changed the title without telling Lang and the producer re-cut the film. It was the first Western with a theme song. His relations with his next producer on *Clash by Night* (1952) were more to his liking

and he is proud of the documentary style opening footage which he and cameraman Nicholas Musuraca shot. He also had trouble with the young Marilyn Monroe who was being given the star build-up at this time. Shortly after *Clash by Night*, Lang was blacklisted because of his affiliation with Communists. He denied being a Communist but admitted the affiliations because he was of the opinion at the time that the Communists were the only group actively opposed to the Nazis. He was out of work for a year and a half until Harry Cohn gave him *The Blue Gardenia* in the latter half of 1953. Shot in 20 days, it was a particularly venomous picture of American life – his personal reaction to the McCarthy affair. His second film for Columbia that year, *The Big Heat*, was a return to his accusation against crime. It is a violently paced film but the bulk of the actual violence is suggested rather than shown. Lang is a firm believer in the power of suggestion encouraged by the visual impact of the result of violence. Renoir was again used as source material for *Human Desire* (1954), a remake of *La Bete Humaine* (1938) which was one of producer Jerry Wald's favourite films – 'There were a lot of trains going into tunnels which Jerry thought was a sex symbol'.

*Moonfleet* (1955) was his first Cinemascope film. He looked on it as an assignment and disliked Cinemascope; the overly-romantic plot and the ending were put in at the producer's insistence. He is very enthusiastic about *While the City Sleeps* (1956), a story of a psychotic killer. He and the writer Casey Robinson used both Lang's experiences on making *M* and his file of newspaper cuttings as source material. He refutes allegations that some of the newspeople shown in the film are more objectionable than the killer on the grounds that they are true to life types and regards it as being as good as *Fury* or *M*. He used Dana Andrews again in *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (1956) as a newspaper reporter who cooks up a hypothetical case framing himself for murder to prove his point that the innocent sometimes get hanged. Destiny takes a hand and he finds himself trapped by circumstance. Lang was dubious as to the credibility of the climax in which the cynical but clean-cut American hero, Andrews, proves to be the real killer. He quarrelled so much with the producer of the film that he has not made another film in America.

Since then, he has made three films in Germany. *Der Tiger Von Eschnapur* [*Das Indische Grabmal*] (1959) is a two-part adventure film based on an idea which Lang and his wife



had developed in 1920 only for producer/director Joe May to take over the project. It had been remade under Hitler by Richard Eichberg in 1937 and Lang felt it was time he completed the project he had begun 39 years earlier. He made these films in the hope of having a financial success that would enable him to work without any restrictions, but neither they nor his last film, *Die Tausend Augen Des Dr Mabuse* (1961), provided this success.

Nicholas Garnham's book on *M* will be of great value to students of Lang, film historians and movie buffs. Each successive book in Lorrimer's script series has shown an improvement. Garnham's opens with a succinct introduction, followed by a largely objective description of the content of the film. The perfectionist might quibble with certain of the personal interpretations as to the nature of some supporting characters or poetic licence in the linguistic terminology of the translations but, on the whole, it is excellent. The 35 illustrations are glossily produced and well chosen. Bogdônovich's book confirms the picture of Lang as an emotional man with strong personal convictions and, although it provides little factual information not already in print concerning him, it does shed light on his methods and approach to making films. The book is lavishly illustrated with 121 stills and contains an extremely comprehensive filmography of both realized and unrealized projects.

Kingsley Canham  
works for *The  
Observer* and  
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## JEAN-LUC GODARD PAR JEAN-LUC GODARD

*Editions Pierre Belfond. Collection des Cahiers du Cinema* 1968.  
14 N.F.

A sign – if such were needed – of the coming of age of the Nouvelle Vague is the appearance of the collected criticism of Jean-Luc Godard, a thick four hundred page book covering seventeen years of journalistic activity, from his article on Joseph Mankiewicz published in the *Gazette du Cinéma* in June 1960 to the 'manifesto' which formed part of the press-book of *La Chinoise* in August 1967. 'Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard' forms the first volume of what promises to be a fascinating series, setting itself the most laudable aim of 'allowing film-makers to speak for themselves' and uniting 'the critical texts, theoretical essays

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and interviews of the principal film-makers of our time. So – film-maker and critic coinciding in the same man – creation becomes itself its own commentary'. This type of approach is clearly an ideal one for the newer film-makers of the Cinémathèque generation who have served an apprenticeship in criticism and remain consciously aware of their sources. The age of the master-craftsman (Ford) – like that of the primitive (Feuillade) – is over and we now live in the age of the creator-critic. To represent this new kind of cinematic awareness the editors could have chosen no one better than Jean-Luc Godard who has so often stated his belief that criticism and creation are part of one and the same impulse.

Review – continued

'Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard' is a volume to rank alongside André Bazin's 'Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?' (published in four parts by the Edition du Cerf between 1958 and 1962 – partially and inadequately rendered into English by Hugh Gray for the University of California Press) and 'Agee on Film' (published in this country by Peter Owen in 1963-4). Just as James Agee's film work comes in two complementary packages – the reviews and the scripts – so too Godard can be judged only as critic *and* film-maker, as reviewer for 'Arts' and 'Cahiers du Cinéma' *and* director of *Weekend*. This being so the present volume does not occasion a large-scale revaluation of Godard's position in the cinema and indeed it is fair to say that the films he has directed illuminate retrospectively his criticism as much as they are clarified by it. Whereas Bazin offers longish pieces of detailed analysis which may have been stimulated by a particular film then newly released but which are far removed from simple reviews, Godard – like Agee – is primarily a reviewer. He eschews systematic or sustained theorizing and his insights are to be found in fragmentary form scattered throughout about a hundred short reviews and two longish interviews (taken from 'Cahiers du Cinéma' Nos. 138 and 171). The material in Bazin's 'Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma?' is arranged thematically and it can be profitably read from cover to cover as a book, but 'Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard' is clearly a work designed for un-systematic browsing. In view of this the editor, Jean Narboni, has failed to some extent in not providing the index which would allow the reader to use the book to best advantage, moving from one allusion to another, tracing the growth of Godard's involvement with, say, Renoir or Rossellini, or simply savouring the range of his extra-filmic

references. Otherwise the general arrangement and presentation of the book is excellent, Narboni having wisely chosen to group the material strictly chronologically in five major sections: First Texts (1950-52), Return to Criticism (1956-8), The Struggle on Two Fronts: Arts and Cahiers du Cinéma, The Year of *A Bout de Souffle*, (1959) and Alongside the Films (1959-67).

Criticism of this kind is principally a matter of direct confrontations and the editor shows his awareness of this by presenting Godard both as interviewer (talking to Rivette and Reichenbach, Rossellini and Renoir) and as interviewee. Given his concern with immediate impact it is understandable that Godard's interest should often be with the basic unit of film structure, the shot, as witnessed by his analysis of Kenji Mizoguchi's art (pp. 110-114) in terms of 180 degree pans and the discussion of Alexandre Astruc's *Une Vie* (p. 160) as reflected in horizontal and vertical movement. The air of spontaneity generated by his criticism derives from the fact that he plays with words in his reviews in much the same way that he plays with images or image-sound relationships in his films. He savours a pun on the name of the inventor of the cinematograph: 'Méliès was the greater but without Lumière he would have remained in total darkness' (p. 330), and he favours a bold assertion of paradox: 'It is impossible to be more romantically classical than Georges Franju' (p. 252). Even in his obituary note on Jacques Becker he cannot resist the opportunity to toy with words: 'Jacques Lupin alias Artagnan Becker is dead then' (p. 274).

Along with this verbal by-play, Godard offers a brief conducted tour around the cultural landmarks of Western civilization. Robert Bresson, we learn, 'is the French cinema, as Dostoievski is the Russian novel and Mozart is German music' (p. 66), and Renoir's *La Nuit du Carrefour*, we are told, proves the equation 'Simenon = Balzac + Dostoievski' (p. 96). Godard quotes Nietzsche in his account of Rouch's *Moi un Noir* (p. 226), Apollinaire in his masterly attack on Yves Ciampi (p. 202), while Georges Bernanos figures in the discussion of *La Tête contre les Murs* (p. 252), and André Malraux's name is invoked on numerous occasions. Resnais's *Le Chant du Styrene* is not merely a film but 'a single Jovian tracking shot, the prodigious phrasing of which cannot fail to evoke the great cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach' (p. 195), while Rouch is 'more important than Stánislavsky' and 'more important than Pirandello as

well' (p. 227). Usually Godard remains within the world of the arts but a Rossellini film prompts him to annex fresh territory: '*India* embraces the world of the cinema as the theories of Riemann and Planck do those of geometry and classical physics' (p. 256). This taste for cultural references leads to one of the most striking features of Godard's critical style, the panoramic view: 'There was the theatre (Griffith), poetry (Murnau), painting (Rossellini), dance (Eisenstein), music (Renoir). But from now on there is the cinema. And the cinema is Nicholas Ray' (p. 100). This statement which prefaced a 1958 review of Ray's *Bitter Victory* contains enough openings for a dozen critical articles but its value is undermined by the somewhat arbitrary nature of the classification. Six years later a few of the same names recur, but a critical equivalent of musical chairs has taken place in the meantime: 'There are several ways of making films. Like Jean Renoir and Robert Bresson who compose music. Like Sergei Eisenstein who painted pictures. Like Stroheim who wrote talking novels in the silent era. Like Alain Resnais who is a sculptor. And like Socrates, I mean Rossellini, who is simply a philosopher' (p. 341).

Given this unique combination of largely irrelevant cultural pretension and acute critical insight, it comes as no surprise that some of Godard's criticism is marred by phrases of apparently deliberate obscurity: 'To the question "What is Cinema?", *Elena et les Hommes* replies: more than Cinema' (p. 38). His review of Becker's *Montparnasse 19* is similarly esoteric. The film, Godard tells us, 'will not prove to you that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Its purpose lies elsewhere. Its purpose is the absence of purpose, its truth the absence of truth. *Montparnasse 19* will only prove to you that  $2 - 2 = 0$ ' (p. 120). But Godard's rare flashes of general theory are often extremely illuminating. There is his discussion of the incompatibility of fiction and documentary in Malraux's *L'Espoir* (p. 225), his division of Westerns into those based on the images, those based on ideas, and those combining the two (p. 198), and his characterization of the Nouvelle Vague which, he says, is 'defined by this new relationship between film and reality. It is also defined by regret, by a nostalgia for a cinema that no longer exists' (p. 315). What is always refreshing about Godard on the cinema is that for him there are no barriers between genres: 'All the great fiction films tend towards the documentary, just as all the great documentaries tend towards fiction' (p. 225). And always his taste is totally eclectic: '*Lola Montès* is the opposite of *Jaguar*,

boys, an old man, anything at all, everything which is simultaneously real, strange and charming'. He can define his humour: 'Jacques Tati has a sense of comedy because he has a sense of what is strange', and his limitations: 'His films are good in spite of his ideas'. All this is perceptive analysis, precise and informative, but it makes nonsense of the original comparison with *Rome Open City*. Who would say of 'Socrates, I mean, Rossellini' that he is interested in blades of grass or that his films are good in spite of his ideas? 'Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard' is an uneven book, full of rare insight and critical aberration (preferring *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* to *Hiroshima Mon Amour*!), penetration and mere verbal fireworks. It embraces in fact the whole range of contradiction and brilliance that characterizes Godard as a film-maker. Perhaps the greatest value it has for us in England is the awareness it communicates of the importance of tradition in the cinema as in other arts. Reading it one appreciates that this most individual and idiosyncratic of cinéastes is not working as an isolated figure but as part of a group, and inheritor of a rich cinematic tradition. The cinema's past is clearly a live entity for Godard as for almost all his French contemporaries and his homage to the man who made this possible – a speech defending Henri Langlois delivered at the Cinémathèque in 1966 – should be required reading for all the bureaucrats who control the National Film Archive. If Cinémathèque + Cahiers du Cinéma = Jean-Luc Godard, what is produced by National Film Archive + Sight and Sound?

Review – continued

Roy Armes is the author of *The Cinema of Alain Resnais* and has just completed a study of Neo Realism. He at present is revising his two-volume work *French Cinema Since 1956*. He will be glad to hear from anyone who has noticed any errors of fact in this work.

## FILM MAKING IN SCHOOLS

Douglas Lowndes *Batsford* 42s.

Newcomers to film teaching should read Mr. Lowndes' book. There are many exciting ideas displayed with practical information and experiences to add conviction to Mr. Lowndes' enthusiasm. They should not be deterred if the author's organization of his material is somewhat chaotic although it is difficult at times to avoid registering a protest at the book's style and structure.

Much of the work done at Hornsey College of Art in recent years is documented here for the first time. Its relevance to film-making in schools is fundamental since the approaches

do take account of educational needs. Film-making is here an integrated activity within the established teaching areas of Art, Drama, English, Media and Social Studies. Mr. Lowndes has no time for the 'let's make a film' approach. The book divides into three basic sections: Equipment, Projects and Technical Notes which follows a brief and not very well-defined section called Teaching Considerations, where two arguments are advanced (a) film-making develops a critical response and helps 'the group to achieve a sense of perspective when expressing opinions based on reportage by the mass media' and (b) 'the fact that they (film and TV) communicate through word and image provides the first opportunity for the educationalist to develop both verbal and visual abilities in a composite course and so avoid the present division in education'.

For years people argued for the school film on grounds that amount to little more than it offers group therapy and that the finished film is something to show the parents. It is inevitable that innovators should similarly feel the need to justify their ideas on a more clearly defined educational basis. But this is a pity since the reasons offered seem always to imply that film-making will offer definite practical advantages quite beyond the experiences involved in itself. The first argument is supported by the following quotation: *'Yet however much we may complain about the child's vulnerability to the mass media, that complaint will remain superficial and a little dishonest unless we are prepared to take the obvious way of developing standards of criticism in children. The way to learn what is well done and what badly, the way to distinguish between the merely slick and the attempt to say something genuine – is to try to do it yourself'.*

This is of course nothing to do with criticism, even if it could be agreed that film-making produces film critics (when the scanty evidence tends if anything to prove the opposite). It is the familiar old view that it is somehow the teachers' duty to inoculate children against the mass media. Advocating Leacock documentaries as offering a kind of authenticity (because they use light portable equipment) which can be contrasted with 'artificial sets or reconstructions of reality' is to take an extremely naïve position.

In the second 'consideration' where the integration of word and image is discussed, the author stresses the lack of contact between say Art and English teachers and sees film-making as offering a linking subject. Here he suggests the student should have the opportunity to express himself in verbal and visual terms.

The section on Equipment takes various pieces of apparatus and demonstrates a project that can be done with each. The still camera, the 8-mm. camera, the 16-mm. camera, tape-recorders and combinations of these are introduced in relation to specific projects. For example the building up of a sequence of stills to make a coherent visual statement or the observation of people in the street with a movie camera passed round a group of students. The illustrations and layout of this book – for which Mr. Lowndes was himself responsible – are excellent and the most compelling argument for the kind of work he advocates is the appearance of the book, the visual appeal of the stills he has selected and their presentation. So the sequence of stills he uses here – of boys rolling wheels along a street – makes a more telling case for the use of the still camera than when Mr. Lowndes claims ‘the film does not run continuously through the camera as in cine, the student can therefore consider individual shots, angle and composition’. His other points on the advantages of the still camera as an introductory piece of apparatus are much more persuasive, emphasizing its manageability as opposed to the projected image.

The 8-mm. camera, it is agreed, disciplines the eye. A small group of students go into the street to observe old age. They each take a few feet of film, i.e. they preselect what they might shoot and then shoot it, all on the same film. Subsequently the quality of their observation is discussed. Thus the 8-mm. camera with its expendable film allows freedom for the student to acquire instinctive technique which he would get much less easily from the more expensive 16 mm. However, 16 mm. is valuable for editing and with tutor-shot film, the students are given single frames from each sequence to put into an order based on ‘the actual movement of the person or object (boy on a slide) . . . and the graphic movement in the composition of the shot (the line the slide makes across the screen)’.

The final section on equipment deals with the integration of sound and vision, where a tape-recorded narrative comments on stills filmed on 16 mm., where photographs taken in a random order are carefully organized to produce the finished effect – a personal and subjective account of life in Cornwall.

The ideas in this book became even more exciting in the section of projects where film work is linked to subject teaching.



The English project was designed to improve written self-expression by shooting material to counterpoint previously selected comments or statements. The follow-up then concerns itself with the possible effect of this double impact in both verbal and visual communication where a more sustained poem about a dog is associated with matching film stills.

The Drama projects begin with experiments using a tape-recorder and then move to improvisations, expressing actions and situations in front of the camera. 'The aim at this stage is to channel interest and concentrate in gesture, facial expression or movement, these being the functional parts of cinematic language the intuitive awareness of these elements in fundamental to a genuine understanding of cinema'. At the end of this project work a 16-mm. film is made by the group, but the principle remains the same. The group occupy a café and are filmed improvising situations. The camera rehearses its movements between tables, but the developments of the characters' situations retain their spontaneity.

The section on *Slide and tape in relation to film and drama* embraces a number of ideas where the author is suggesting possibilities for further projects, improvised 'acting' in front of the camera, school work integrating the making of a documentary tape and film. The role of slides in this is not well-developed.

The section on Art contains some reassuring suggestions for teachers who are confined to making their films within a classroom set-up. These vary from paintings of stories, through simple animation to the use of cut-outs from comics. Again, beautifully illustrated, the stills the author chooses support his arguments and emphasize the young child's instinctive use of close-up when painting for film and the gradual development of the principles of graphic design.

The section headed *Film Study Course* is inadequate. It details a project where a still camera is used to test film documentary properties as suggested by Kracauer. The project 'At Home' is interesting, but the chapter begs the question of what the teacher's responsibilities are in formal film education. The author quotes Antonioni's *Eclipse* (sic) – as he has similarly mentioned other films by casual reference, but the relationship between film study and practical work is not discussed. Mr. Lowndes must have a structure for his students' viewing sessions; it would be helpful to know what

this is. We are told that in the *At Home* project 'The cutting of the sequences link these elements together, and give pace and meaning to the film'. There are supporting stills to back up this statement but no guidance is offered as to how the teacher makes explicit to the students the nature of the decisions involved in film-making.

The final Technical section is valuable in that it is concise and illustrated with photographs of actual equipment to show lens settings, lightmeter scales and their practical applications. The curious diagrammatic hybrids that illustrate equipment in the average cine books have no place here. Sometimes, however, a little more text would help the novice. Being told 'set film speed on meter' and shown a lightmeter in close-up with A.S.A. and DIN settings may be confusing when in the section on *Film Speed*, only A.S.A. has been mentioned. The section on cement splicing could perhaps have made the point that most film splicers have fixed rather than moveable clamps and that sellotape splicing is a valuable alternative to cement. The sections on sound recording and the school film workshop are particularly valuable.

The concluding section *Films and Extracts* is poor, listing a handful of film libraries and dealing inadequately with the kind of services offered by the BFI Education Dept. This is a pity since teachers converted by the author's enthusiasm are likely to look around for extra assistance.

The main shortcoming of this book is that the author tries too hard to plead his case. He tries to demonstrate that the many projects he has initiated are part of an integrated use of film in education, which seems unnecessary. If such a total view of film-making becomes possible in the next decade, it will be because of Mr. Lowndes' vision. His achievement in film work will enlighten many teachers. His book is uniquely valuable.

TERRY BOLAS

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## Films

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L'ETRANGER

Luchino Visconti, 1968

The adaptation to the screen of a widely known novel by an eminent film director must stimulate controversy as to the function of transposing a work from one medium to another.

this is. We are told that in the *At Home* project 'The cutting of the sequences link these elements together, and give pace and meaning to the film'. There are supporting stills to back up this statement but no guidance is offered as to how the teacher makes explicit to the students the nature of the decisions involved in film-making.

The final Technical section is valuable in that it is concise and illustrated with photographs of actual equipment to show lens settings, lightmeter scales and their practical applications. The curious diagrammatic hybrids that illustrate equipment in the average cine books have no place here. Sometimes, however, a little more text would help the novice. Being told 'set film speed on meter' and shown a lightmeter in close-up with A.S.A. and DIN settings may be confusing when in the section on *Film Speed*, only A.S.A. has been mentioned. The section on cement splicing could perhaps have made the point that most film splicers have fixed rather than moveable clamps and that sellotape splicing is a valuable alternative to cement. The sections on sound recording and the school film workshop are particularly valuable.

The concluding section *Films and Extracts* is poor, listing a handful of film libraries and dealing inadequately with the kind of services offered by the BFI Education Dept. This is a pity since teachers converted by the author's enthusiasm are likely to look around for extra assistance.

The main shortcoming of this book is that the author tries too hard to plead his case. He tries to demonstrate that the many projects he has initiated are part of an integrated use of film in education, which seems unnecessary. If such a total view of film-making becomes possible in the next decade, it will be because of Mr. Lowndes' vision. His achievement in film work will enlighten many teachers. His book is uniquely valuable.

TERRY BOLAS

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## Films

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L'ETRANGER

Luchino Visconti, 1968

The adaptation to the screen of a widely known novel by an eminent film director must stimulate controversy as to the function of transposing a work from one medium to another.

Opinions on this subject diverge sharply. At one end of the scale we find the view expressed by Ingmar Bergman that 'film has nothing to do with literature; the character and substance of the two art forms are usually in conflict' and we should 'avoid making films out of books'. As a literary critic, Leslie Fiedler looks for the director's ability to strike 'analogous attitudes' and to find 'analogous rhetorical techniques'. Bluestone's view falls somewhere between these two extremes. He regards the filmed novel as a kind of paraphrase in which the source novel is virtual raw material out of which characters and incidents are extracted as mythic figures. A fourth and probably more popular view is that put forward by Alain Robbe-Grillet who has commented on the cinema as 'heir to the psychological and naturalistic tradition' attempting to transpose a story into pictures with the frequent unlooked for result that the 'filmed story drags us out of our comfortable state of mind and into the world it shows us, and with a violence we would look for in vain in the corresponding written text whether novel or scenario'. Like many people, he sees (albeit with mixed feelings) the potential power of the cinema to invest its subject with a more remarkable degree of realistic illusion than can be conveyed by the written word.

Each of these approaches has some relevance to a view of Visconti's film of Camus's *L'Etranger*. Such a conjunction seems incongruous. Visconti must generally be associated with a style rich in sensuous observation of detail, the lingering scrutiny of groups of people and an unfashionable inclination towards the exploration of moments of high drama. He is (without pejorative overtones) a kind of nineteenth-century novelist of the cinema. *L'Etranger*, on the other hand, is a terse first person narrative veering towards the *roman à these*. Until the final chapters its dominant rhetorical mode is one of understatement. The novel is concerned primarily with establishing and describing attitudes rather than people. Indeed, Algiers itself in which most of the action takes place is a more dominant protagonist than any human figure in the work.

It is presumably this last element which stirred Visconti's imagination in the same way that Lampedusa's image of Sicily was crucial to Visconti's *Il Gattopardo*. Even so, *L'Etranger* as a novel still appears in many ways alien to Visconti's stylistic leanings. The central character is a solitary figure whose connections with any social group are tenuous. Secondary figures emerge with something of

the one-sided function of characters in a morality play and the success or failure of their depiction owes little to the author's sense of 'felt life'. For most of the novel's duration there is no sense of an inevitable end. Meursault's belief in the impossibility of taking up a moral position over human behaviour is presented as the position of an isolated man. The process Visconti's film charts is Meursault's inevitable movement from an illusory position of isolated observer towards the ultimate passionate rhetoric of defiance against the society which annihilates him. It is at this point that his own attitude becomes a moral principle and he asserts his membership of society by longing for 'howls of execration' to greet his execution.

Bearing in mind these factors it is remarkable to find the screenplay of Georges Conchon, Emmanuel Robles and (Visconti's most constant collaborator) Suso Cecchi D'Amico so close to the original novel. The degree to which Camus's work has been consulted means that any disparity is rendered particularly significant. Whereas Camus begins 'at the beginning' with the words 'Mother died today', Visconti plunges us straight into the moments leading up to the court scene and the accusation of Meursault, concluding with the ingenuous reply that his story should speak for itself it is so 'simple'. The film then flashes back to the Camus opening and the narrative unfolds in the light of Meursault's eventual trial in which the audience is now involved as judge. In this way Visconti endows his film with dramatic suspense and a sense of fate alien to the novel. Such suspense is increased by several methods of emphasis. The sequence over which the credits roll shows Meursault (Marcello Mastroianni) travelling to his mother's funeral. His clothes are soaked with sweat and a rapid physical disintegration appears to set in. Curiously, he alone of the travellers on the bus perspires so freely. Sweat is a motif constantly repeated in the imagery of the film where the streets are said to be sweating and where finally the priest observes the walls of the prison 'sweating' with the sufferings of former prisoners. Present in the novel, this idea is visually emphatic in the film.

The film's insistent music increases in foreboding as it progresses and is later contrasted with the thin expressionless piping of the Arab in the scene prior to the shooting. The piping is both alien and mesmerizing. It is repeated when Meursault is in the communal cell with the Arabs and becomes a reflection of the neutral attitude with which

he is regarded by his fellow prisoners when he confesses to having killed an Arab. A sharp distinction appears to be drawn between the attitude of the French colonials and those of the Arabs. The surging music is an expression of the habitual Western response to a situation which society insists should be played out in conformity with its own conventions. A chance killing becomes a premeditated 'murder'. The murder becomes an excuse for a ritual social catharsis. Meursault's accurate evidence can never be accepted as 'true' by society because his language is not that of society. The sun as a factor explaining his action is inadmissible as evidence. Like the Ancient Mariner, Meursault is caught up in a sin and expiation syndrome which ignores the motivation of the initial act.

Visconti's interpretation of the scenes played out between Meursault and the examining magistrate differs only slightly from the Camus original but this variation is an important one of tone. Having failed to break Meursault's defences at the sight of a brandished crucifix, the magistrate in Camus's novel withdraws into a somewhat cynical bantering with Meursault in which he calls him 'M. L'Antichrist'. In Visconti's film this name is uttered in operatic tones of exaggerated loathing. If it is comedy it is comedy on a very different plane.

Clearly Visconti is concerned with transposing Camus's novel to the screen in some sense. It is not mere raw material; on the other hand he does not seem concerned with finding an analogous mode of rhetoric for all the film's linguistic closeness to the detail of the original. Visconti does not attempt to delude us into thinking that we have Camus's novel in another medium. On the contrary, the closeness to the text of Camus brings out more clearly the idea that Visconti is offering us his *interpretation*. The story of the outsider becomes in his terms the history of Meursault's 'passion' – the ordeal leading to inevitable martyrdom. The film dealing with such subject matter and held together by a spoken first person narrative has Bressonian echoes although its hero's ultimate defiance of his ordeal is a reversal of the Bressonian hero's position. The sweating Meursault has something of a Christ-like aura around him (an aspect Camus himself perceived) but he is far from submissive to his tormentor, bourgeois society.

For Visconti, the significance of Meursault's stand is that it is a form of social protest. The camera picks out the squalid

surroundings and contrasts them with the brilliance of light and water. It lingers on objects such as the dirty pan out of which Meursault eats or the twisted black frazzle on the plates during the supper with Raymond. The camera's survey of the group of old people gathered round Mme. Meursault's coffin reflects not only the speculations of Camus's hero as to the degree of humanity to be attributed to them but also suggests the strangeness of their position in society. Grouped together round a coffin, they too are outsiders.

The element Visconti omits from his film is Camus's notion of the absurd which in some sense elucidates the whole novel. The protest of Camus's hero is in the first instance, derived from a philosophical position which motivates his actions. Visconti's interpretation excludes the 'absurd' from its vocabulary. Mastroianni's Meursault responds directly to the social hypocrisy by which he is surrounded. The growth of a sense of comradeship with the pimp Raymond has an emphasis in the film which is certainly absent from the novel. Significantly, the incident in the prison cell where Meursault discovers the newspaper story of the accidental murder of a son by his mother and sister through a case of mistaken identity (later used by Camus as the basis for a play) is not included in Visconti's film. It would have been an irrelevance were it to have been included since Visconti's hero is a social victim, the honesty of whose responses isolates him from his environment rather than the Camusian hero detached from society by his intellectual stance.

Whilst *L'Étranger* is unlikely to hold a major position in Visconti's *oeuvre*, it is in several ways remarkable. It is perhaps too easy to underestimate Visconti's superb ability to render an authentic sense of period (a quality virtually unique to him amongst Western film directors). This achievement is considerable when we observe his handling of Marcello Mastroianni and Anna Karina, both actors identified closely with a stereotype image of the sixties. Karina (Marie) with curling hair and the striped cotton dress mentioned in the novel is transformed almost beyond recognition whilst Mastroianni manages to shed his impassive elegance for a withdrawn slightly dazed shabbiness. The atmosphere of the film has a poetic dimension – even a slightly mystical quality present in moments such as Mastroianni's confrontation with the piping Arab or the shot of a solitary bird against the intense blue sky.

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Yet there is a certain thematic exiguity in Visconti's interpretation which prevents the film from reaching the heights of his other more ambitious adaptation in colour—*Il Gattopardo*. The film is perhaps for all its sense of inevitability, too leisurely. The Alice in Wonderland court scene provides an unsatisfactory peak to the story where the emphasis is placed on Meursault's victimization rather than on society's panic-stricken revenge on the propagator of the notion of the absurd. It is difficult to know just how much interest the film would bear were its source unknown. Ultimately, its most interesting aspect lies in the tension between the meticulously close adaptation of the screenplay and the freedom of interpretation which Visconti's style allows.

#### FILM CREDITS

*producer* Dino De Laurentiis, *associate producer* Pietro Notaranni, *production manager* Mario Lupi, *assistant directors* Rinaldo Ricci and Albino Cocchi, *script* Luchina Visconti, Suso Cecchi D'Amico and Georges Conchon, *based on the novel by* Albert Camus, *co-adaptation* Emmanuel Robles, *photography* Giuseppe Rotunno, *colour* Technicolor, *editor* Ruggero Mastroianni, *art director* Mario Garbuglia, *music* Piero Piccioni, *music director* Bruno Nicolai, *sound* Vittorio Trentino. A Marianne Production. *Cast*: MARCELLO MASTROIANNI: Meursault, ANNA KARINA: Marie Cardona, GEORGES WILSON: Examining Magistrate, BERNARD BLIER: Defence Counsel, JACQUES HERLIN: Director of Home, GEORGES GERET: Raymond Sintes, JEAN-PIERRE ZOLA: Employer, MIMMO PALMARA: Masson, ANGELA LUCE: Mme. Masson, BRUNO CREMER: Priest, PIERRE BERTIN: Judge, MARC LAURENT: Emmanuel, ALFRED ADAM: Prosecutor, VITTORIO DUSE: Lawyer, JOSEPH MARECHAL: Salamano, SAADA CHERITEL: 1st Arab, MOHAMED RALEM: 2nd Arab, BRAHIM HADJADJ: 3rd Arab. 104 mins. Distributed by Paramount Film Service Ltd., 162 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

#### 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

Stanley Kubrick, 1968

In a semi-arid wasteland, a man-ape discovers for the first time that he can destroy things with a bone – it is the Dawn of Man. In Clavius Base on the moon, a tall black monolith



Review—continued

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suddenly emits an ear-piercing sound – it is man's first communication with extra-terrestrial life. On the spaceship *Discovery* a humanized computer lip-reads his rebellious astronauts' plans to disconnect him – it is man's first mission to Jupiter. Finally an astronaut enters the star-gate and travels through infinite corridors of lights, through galactic explosions and over multi-coloured terrain of worlds yet to be born – it is man's first trip beyond infinity and into immortality. These are four key scenes from the main sections of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a film that can be considered, with some reservations, a cinematic milestone in both the technical achievement and in its aesthetic exposition.

The specialized and somewhat unique production techniques used in the filming of *2001* were outlined in a series of articles published in a recent edition of *American Cinematographer* (June 1968). This magazine appears to have a very small distribution in this country. I thought it would be of value for the readers of *Screen* to present a digest of the material in these articles.

The first striking thing about the film is the sharp grain-free quality of its photography despite the fact that more than half of the shots are 'duplicates'. In this kind of film which involves photographing miniature space models moving against stellar backgrounds and astronauts moving in and around their spaceships, it is necessary to duplicate and overlay the various backgrounds and foregrounds. Normally, the end result has the poor quality of a second generation print, i.e. a print made from a duplicate negative which in turn comes from a master positive which in turn comes from the original negative. Kubrick avoided this problem in two ways.

First he uses Technicolor's duplicating process. Instead of getting a colour print from an intermediate duplicate, he uses three-colour Separation masters. Three separate strips of film each carrying one of the primary colours (blue, red and green) positive from the original negative are used as 'masters' to dye-print the final positive and thus, by using a physical printing process and not a chemical emulsion, there is no photographic grain.

Secondly, in many scenes Kubrick photographs the various elements in a scene on to the same original negative. Take, for example, a scene involving the fly-by of a spaceship with the miniature projection of the interior action visible through

the window. Instead of photographing the spaceship on one negative and the small projected image on another and combining them on a third to get a composite image, Kubrick first photographs the movement of the spaceship with the window area blacked out. Then he rewinds the same original negative to its original frame, photographs the movement again, this time with the spaceship draped in black velvet and the interior action front-projected on to a glossy white card that exactly fits the window area. In other words, it is a method of photographing an element in a scene, making a number of exactly reproduced takes, developing one take to check for colour and movement and holding the other takes until the other elements in the scene are ready to be photographed. Only when all the elements are photographed is the 'held Negative' developed to produce a first-generation sharp grain-free print. This method of multiple-repeat-takes and held-negative necessitates identical camera movement for each take for each element and for each element in each scene. This is made possible through a specially constructed camera animating device with a heavy 20-foot worm-gear which enables the camera to be moved in any direction with precise accuracy and with its various functions synchronized by selsyn motors.

Two interesting problems arise. One is the problem of keeping track of the held-negatives since different elements of a scene may be photographed months apart. The other is the problem of exposure. Since all the elements are being photographed on to the same strip of negative, exposures have to be precisely balanced for, if one exposure is wrong during the filming of one element, there is no way of correcting it without ruining the other previously photographed elements.

*2001* is the first film to make an extensive use of the technique of front projection. Normally, to reproduce the spectacular landscape backgrounds against which the man-apes move in the *Dawn of Man* sequence, painted backdrops or back-projection methods would be used. Neither of these gives the illusion of reality which Kubrick wanted to capture. Shooting on location in south-west Africa was out of the question because they would be at the mercy of the weather. Hence, Kubrick decided to use a front-projection technique. This involved the projecting of large transparencies, or king-size slides, against which the apes acted. The largest format to date was a 4 × 5 inch Ektachrome transparency. Kubrick found this was not adequate to get a sharp, clear

reproduction of the background image. Lighting the foreground subjects would degrade the quality of the background. He decided on 8 × 10 inch transparencies and since there was no projector to handle this size, he built his own with a water-cooled arc so strong that he had to use slides of heat-resistant glass in order to prevent heat from peeling the emulsion off the transparency. He set the projector at right angles to the camera, also placing a 36-inch wide partially silvered mirror at about 8 inches in front of the camera lens at a 45 degree angle. The image was then projected on to the mirror and, hence, bounced on to a large screen. The camera would photograph this image through the mirror with a precise micrometric alignment of camera and projector to prevent ‘fringing’. The screen on to which the image was projected was coated with tiny mirrored beads of glass with the incredible capacity of reflecting 100 times the amount of light projected on to it. This light surplus permitted the lighting of the foreground subjects without degrading the quality of the background and, hence, producing scenes of remarkable verisimilitude. As you watch the *Dawn of Man* sequence, you really get the impression that it was photographed on location in south-west Africa. The filming of the outer space scenes was a laborious painstaking operation especially with regard to obtaining proper exposure. Out of a concern for sharp photographic quality Kubrick wanted a maximum depth of field. This meant he had to work with a very small lens opening. But, as he also wanted to preserve the realistic lighting of space which consists of ‘a single bright point light source’, he could not simply increase the lighting. Therefore, he had to work at a very slow frame rate, sometimes as long as four seconds per frame. This meant that all the movements of the miniature models had to be geared down to an almost imperceptible speed. In this way he was able to photograph accurately and give the illusion of normal speed once the movements were on film. In passing it might be interesting to note the lighting in *2001* was an integral part of the set with additional lighting used only in certain close-ups.

The problem of producing the illusion of weightlessness was solved in a simple but ingenious way. Kubrick was determined not to let any of the wires supporting the astronauts show. He draped the ceiling of the entire stage in black velvet and mounted the camera vertically so that he could photograph the astronauts from below. This way no matter how much or in which way they moved, the astronauts

would hide the wires with their own bodies. Hence, what appears on screen to have been shot in the usual horizontal position was, in fact, shot vertically.

The most fascinating set in *2001* is the giant centrifuge that serves as the main compartment for the astronauts on the spaceship *Discovery*. Built by the Vickers-Armstrong Engineering Group at a cost of \$750,000, it was 38 feet in diameter, 10 feet in width with a rotation speed of up to three miles an hour. Two types of camera set-ups were used for the sequences in the centrifuge. One was mounted stationary to the set so that it rotated in a 360-degree arc along with the centrifuge. Such a set-up gives the appearance on the screen that the camera is standing still while the astronaut walks away from it, up the wall, around the top and down the other side.

The second set-up was a mobile camera mounted on a small dolly which stayed with the astronaut at the bottom while the whole set moved past him. It was necessary to position this camera about 20 feet up the wall keeping it in position with a steel cable from the outside that connected the camera through a slot in the centre of the floor running round the entire centrifuge. This slot was concealed by rubber mats which fell back into place as soon as the cable passed them. The action was directed by Kubrick from outside watching a closed-circuit monitor which relayed a picture from a closed-circuit vidicon camera mounted next to the film camera.

In an interview published in the *Australian Film Guide* (Vol. 1, No. 12) Stanley Kubrick said he didn't like to talk very much about *2001* because it is essentially a non-verbal experience which is meant to be grasped at the sub-conscious level of feelings rather than at the conscious level of intelligence. *2001* was meant as a film that would break the convention of verbal experience and establish the pre-eminence of the visual experience.

Since less than half the film has any dialogue and as even this dialogue is far from giving any adequate explanatory information of what's going on, Kubrick is justified. This is especially evident in the opening prologue of the *Dawn of Man* and in the final sequence of the astronaut's galactic trip through the universe into immortality. Here we are presented only with images and sound effects. In Marshall McLuhan's jargon, the structural form of this film is cool, i.e. there is a small amount of factual data presented. This

elicits a greater participation on the part of the viewer who is called upon to fill in the mosaic presented to him.

Review – continued

Rather than absorb and attempt to fit the image and effects into a coherent pattern, the esoteric images and effects might bounce off the viewer so that the film fails to accomplish what it set out to do – namely, elicit participation on the part of the audience. I would think that the prologue in *2001* is an example of a mosaic of image and sound which does work on the viewer. He can absorb the elements and be able to figure out that here the film is talking about the emergence of man and the paradox that his first creative act is the weapon, an implement of destruction. On the other hand the final sequence in the film where the astronaut suddenly ages until he seems to be reborn again is perhaps too esoteric. This is possibly a case where image and sound bounces off the viewer.

Kubrick's use of music is different from what one would normally get in a space film. Instead of the usual quick tempo, rapid beating music to give the feeling of high speed travel, the very unusual Blue Danube waltz is used to accompany the images of the space vehicles floating in outer space. Since in space one doesn't have any immediate stationary environment to compare one's speed with, the sensation of travelling through space is probably very slow and calm – like the slow calm pace of the waltz. Hence, the film's use of the Blue Danube is very appropriate.

Interesting also is the change in the music at the end. During the film, the astronauts are more or less in familiar territory – hence, the familiarity of the waltz. But at the end the familiarity of ordinary space flight gives way to a trans-human journey into another space-time dimension and, hence, the Blue Danube gives way to the strange dissonant sounds of electronic music. In the very last scene when the star-child appears over Mother Earth, the first man to be reborn again, the first man to achieve immortality is heralded with the opening chords of Richard Strauss's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with all the connotations of the New Superman. In the traditional space film one finds the formula of (1) discovery of IT from outer space, (2) IT is a destructive monster that must be destroyed, (3) how can IT be destroyed, (4) the successful destruction of IT and (5) man returns to his womb Mother Earth safe and sound. In *2001* there is the discovery of IT, but IT is not a monster. Rather IT is something vague – like pure energy or an integrated

immortal consciousness (or perhaps even GOD). IT is not destructive – rather destruction lies in man himself and in his own creations, whether it be the man-ape's bone or the astronaut's computer. Man doesn't try to destroy IT – rather he tries to communicate with IT. In the end IT is the victor who has tempted man away from his womb on Earth and into trans-human experience.

Thematically, *2001* is about many things. On the lowest level there is the narrative itself as Kubrick sees it. An artifact is left on earth by extraterrestrial explorers some 5,000,000 years ago. Another one is left on the moon so that it can signal man's first steps into the universe. Another is placed in the orbit of Jupiter as a relay. Once he has reached Jupiter the astronaut is swept through the star-gate and into another space-time dimension in another galaxy. In the end of his journey he dies but is reborn again and comes back to earth as a star-child as the first man to achieve immortality, as a superman.

However, on other levels, it means anything anybody is feeling about it and according to Kubrick it seems to be some kind of scientific biblical odyssey. The tall black monolith emitting its energy signals is a kind of prophetic sign telling man about extraterrestrial life leading his attention away from earth and into the heavens. Man follows this sign until it brings him into contact with extra-terrestrial existence whose form is beyond comprehension – perhaps it is a sort of integrated immortal cosmic consciousness. We end up then according to Kubrick with perhaps a completely scientific definition of God.

Contact with this cosmic consciousness gives him a kind of immortality since he becomes part of it. This seems very much related to the recent interest of the West in Eastern thought and religion. Here the emphasis is on the fact that all is one, that we are part of everything, that God is a sort of cosmic consciousness; here the wise man is like a newborn child:

'He goes without knowing where he is going and stops without knowing what he is doing. He merges himself with the surrounding and moves along with it' (Chuang-tzu). Is this not the image of the astronaut in *2001* in his final trip through the universe?

In the original script, Arthur Clark, co-author of the screenplay of *2001*, described the ape-man's sensation as realizing

for the first time that he could smash things with a bone. 'Now he was a master of the world, and he was not quite sure what to do next. But he would think of something.' At the end of the script a similar sensation is felt by the star-child; having detonated the circling megaton weapons by putting forth his will, 'he waited, marshalling his thoughts, and brooding over his still untested powers. For though he was master of the world, he was not quite sure what to do next. But he would think of something'.

Review – continued

*2001* relates to Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove* with its concern for the survival of the human race in an age threatened by nuclear annihilation. Perhaps interest in space exploration will be a way of venting human energy and a way out of our present stalemate. Confronted by an infinite universe to be explored and understood, men will perhaps see their earth problems as being very petty indeed and not worth fighting about.

The paradox posed in the *Dawn of Man* episode is that man's first intelligent creative act was the weapon, an implement of destruction. At first he casually tosses the bone back and forth. Then he begins to smash the animal skeleton with all his might. This is photographed in slow motion forcing us to dwell on his sense of power. There is then a series of shots also in slow motion showing skeletons being smashed to pieces. In short, intelligence seems intimately related in its very beginning to destruction. Today man's finest intelligent creations are also the most destructive weapons in history. What is the conclusion then if man equals intelligence and intelligence equals destruction? Will man survive his own creations? This is what *2001* seems to be asking.

Related to this are the creations of man which at first seem to serve him but then often end up enslaving him. This is especially so in reference to the computer in *2001*. Man creates HAL 9000, an almost human computer to guide him on his mission to Jupiter. But the computer revolts, kills the astronauts and takes over the ship. Only after a nerve-racking battle does man overcome his own creation. This is one of the first films where empathy with machines is evoked. They are almost human beings. This is especially so in the series of shots showing the space pod with the astronaut in its arms begging the mother-ship to let her in to safety.

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Review – continued

## FILM CREDITS

*producer* Stanley Kubrick, *associate producer* Victor Lyndon, *director* Stanley Kubrick, *assistant director* Derek Cracknell, *script* Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke, *based on a short story by* Arthur C. Clarke, *photography* Geoffrey Unsworth. Super Panavision. Presented in Cinerama, *colour* Metrocolor, *addit. photography* John Alcott, *special photographic effects designed and directed by* Stanley Kubrick, *editor* Ray Lovejoy, *production designers* Tony Masters, Harry Lange and Ernie Archer, *art director* John Hoesli, *special effects* Wally Veevers, Douglas Trumbull, Con Pederson and Tom Howard, *music* Richard Strauss, Johann Strauss, Aram Khachaturian and György Ligeti, *costumes* Hardy Amies, *sound* Winston Ryder. An MGM Production. *Cast:* KEIR DULLEA: David Bowman, GARY LOCKWOOD: Frank Poole, WILLIAM SYLVESTER: Dr. Heywood Floyd, DANIEL RICHTER: Moonwatcher, DOUGLAS RAIN: Voice of Hal 9000, LEONARD ROSSITER: Smyslov, MARGARET TYZACK: Elena, ROBERT BEATTY: Halvorsen, SEAN SULLIVAN: Michaels, FRANK MILLER: Mission Controller, PENNY BRAHMS: Stewardess, ALAN GIFFORD: Poole's Father, EDWARD BISHOP, GLENN BECK, EDWINA CARROLL, MIKE LOVELL, PETER DELMAN, DANNY GROVER and BRIAN HAWLEY. 141 mins. Distributed by MGM Pictures Ltd., 58 St. James Street, London, S.W.1.

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